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CONTENTS

October, 1924

English Folksongs	<i>A. H. Fox Strangways</i>
Musical Par lance in English Literature—II	<i>W. Wright Roberts</i>
The Claims of Tonic Solfa—I	<i>W. G. Whittaker</i>
John Taverner's Masses	<i>H. B. Collins</i>
Sixteenth Century Service Music	<i>Anselm Hughes</i>
About "Pierrot Lunaire"	<i>L. Fleury</i>
Charles Koechlin's Instrumental Works	<i>M. D. Calvocoressi</i>
On Being Taught Singing	<i>S. Wilson</i>
The Four Types	<i>L. P. Morgan-Browne</i>
Father's Bass Viol	<i>P. Wyatt-Edgell</i>

Reviews of Books

Index—Volumes I to V

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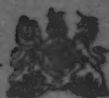
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Music and Letters

OCTOBER, 1924.

VOLUME V.

NUMBER 4

ENGLISH FOLKSONGS

Two things have lately happened in this island to make us think again of what we mean by, and want out of, folksong. One of them is sad, the other merry; and they are not unconnected. Cecil Sharp died on June 23 at the age of sixty-five after a short illness, and Vaughan Williams's *Hugh the Drover* was produced at His Majesty's by the British National Opera Company on July 14. Those who love the English folk, more especially the folk of Gloucester and Somerset, their ways and talk and songs and dances, will remember both dates. There is something fitting in the juxtaposition. The one set the seal on a life of single-minded work and the other is the vindication of the object for which that work was done.

"C#", as he signed himself in letters to his friends, was the son of a City merchant with an appreciation of literature and a passion for architecture. If he had been a musician pure and simple he might have been quoted as a good example of what seems to be more than a tendency and almost a rule, that musicians are born of parents one of whom has a turn for an art, but not necessarily for music. He was a musician, both by instinct and in knowledge, but he was also a practical philosopher and, in the best sense, both an antiquarian and a socialist. His philosophy consisted chiefly in accepting and trying to account for the turn things took, in art, society, business or politics, rather than in arguing or trying to alter them. As for the other attributions, his delight in the old that was passing away and his welcome of the new that was only just coming into sight were

in curiously interesting equipoise. Until they knew him well this puzzled people a good deal; he would talk like an iconoclast and act like an autocrat. He believed not that men were by any means equal, but that they ought to have equal consideration; hence he was always good company and incidentally a good folksong collector, because he had the first essential, the power of making friends anywhere. But he also believed that they ought to be ruled for their good by those whose business it was to do it, and as he was quite ready to obey such ruling, so when he came to form his Folkdance Society there were no divisions in the camp. He was a tremendous worker, and his holiday consisted in a change from one form of work to another. He had a store of information on many subjects; it was unusual to find one on which he was wholly ignorant, and in that rare case it was a compensation to find a good listener. When he talked or lectured, most information was pointed so as to have some bearing on his hobbies, but his friends did not love him any the less because most conversations came round, sooner rather than later, to folksong or dance.

His folksong MSS., which he has left to his college (Clare, Cambridge) contain about six times as much as he has published. He used to discover these songs in all sorts of ways; he would get the parson to find out the singers in villages that were within reach of where he was staying, or he would walk or bicycle from one to another and take his chance on a stoneheap or behind a hayrick; or hearing of a singer in a London workhouse or a decayed West country poet he would take the next train, for fear the one should get ill or the other go to sea. Once or twice he travelled across England only to hear songs he had already got, perhaps, in a better version. When he found a full and ready singer he seldom left him or her till he had got all there was to get. He photographed, and once, at least, photographed—in a gipsy caravan. She was in a great state of mind about it, and said that her husband would undoubtedly kill him when he came back. However, he got the song, and when the husband appeared, held up his hand and shouted "Stop a minute, and listen; I've got your wife's voice in a box"—and as he listened the husband forgot more serious matters. But Sharp disliked mechanical appliances; it was the human side of the whole business that most appealed to him; so he took their faces rather than recorded their quartertones. He passed through a stage of having theories about the modes, but soon found, as everyone else does, that investigations of that kind may all be as they please, or as we like to make them, and yet leave the root of the matter untouched. The modes are only the tone of voice and cast of sentence; the essence of the thing is, as in all other music, the amount

of imagination and the intricacy of balance that have been packed into a given compass.

The collection of the dances was on similar lines, though living specimens were much harder to find and a great deal of work had to be done on the 17 editions of Playford, which he thoroughly examined and was the first to interpret, in order to restore the country dances. Some musicians thought he was deserting music; he knew that he was getting nearer to human beings. For the way to know a man, apart from dining with him, is to pursue some occupation in common; and Sharp danced all these dances, sword and morris too, himself, and, as good judges said, very well. The first thing was to learn them, and the second, even harder, to find out some method of writing them down. But the hardest thing of all was to get them known, and without that his work would have had only an academic interest. Just as he had found it necessary to write accompaniments in order to get the songs sung—and musicians have sometimes disparaged these unnecessarily, not realising that they were intended to have a practical rather than an artistic value—so after a few attempts to teach the dances directly himself, he saw that he must teach teachers and inspire enthusiasts. Thus the English Folkdance Society began in 1911 and in its twelve years of existence, which even the war did not break down, has put more than twenty thousand men, women, and children in possession of a working knowledge of a respectable handful out of a collection of two hundred or so of Morris, Sword and Country Dances. (*Cf. also Music and Letters* for October, 1923.)

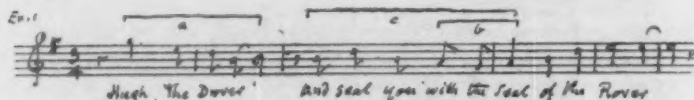
Cecil Sharp's Writings.

- Mu. 1902. A Book of British Folksong.
- B. 1904-9. Folksongs from Somerset. 1-5.
- Me. 1905. Songs of the West.
- F. — Folksong Society's Journal.
- C. 1906. English Folksongs for Schools.
- B. 1907. English Folksong: Some conclusions.
- 1907-24. Morris Book. 1-5.
- Morris Dance Tunes. 1-10.
- 1908. Folksongs from Dorset.
- 1908-11. Folksong Airs from Somerset, arranged.
- 1908-19. Folksong for use in Schools.
- 1909. Folksong Airs, Oxford, etc.
- 1910-12. Children's Singing Games.
- 1910-22. Country Dance Book. 1-6.
- Country Dance Tunes. 1-11.
- 1911. Four Folksongs from Somerset (arranged for violin).
- B. — Folk Carols.
- 1911-14. Sword Dances. 1-3.
- Sword Dances. Tunes. 1-3.
- F. 1912. Folkdancing in Schools.
- E. — Folksinging in Schools.
- 1913. Folksong from Various Counties.
- B. 1914. Folk Chanteys.
- F. — Folksong Society's Journal.
- B. — Midsummer Night's Dream, Songs and Incidental Music.

1915. Fifty Folksongs.
 F. 1916. Folksong Society's Journal.
 D. — A Hundred English Folksongs.
 P. 1917. English Folksongs from the Appalachian Mountains.
 P. 1918-21. American-English Folksongs.
 1919. Introduction to Country Dance.
 1919. Selection of Collected Folksongs.
 1921. English Folksongs, Selected.
 1921-24. Nursery Songs from Appalachian Mountains

The following abbreviations of publishers' names are used:—[B]arnicott and Pearce, [C]urwen, [D]itson, [E]nglish Folkdance Society, [F]olksong Society, [M]ethuen, [M]urray, [P]utnam. The publications not marked with a letter are by Novello.

Hugh the Drover was written to suit a particular composer, with a good deal of his early music running in the librettist's head, one fancies. Harold Child has attended to business and has produced a working plot which will stand wear, in words which are never clumsy or vulgar and which often contain, packed away in a corner, felicitous sayings. The second act seems rather to have beaten him. Hugh has to get out of, and into, and out of, and into the stocks. The words make this intelligible, but we don't hear them all, and something ought to happen before our eyes to explain what looks like lamentable indecision. Also Aunt Jane, the duenna, does not help the plot particularly, though she earns her place by her priceless "keepsake" tune and the neat lyric that it fits, as well as the dignity which makes her decline, if possible, to be folk-song-y like the others. Apart from these defects the pace set by words and music is tremendous. Mary is no stage heroine, but one of those women we meet day after day, and do not recognise their worth till "things happen," when "all at once they leave you and you know them." John is an unredeemed coward and his music is therefore not memorable; better forget him, the music says. Hugh dominates every mind, as his theme



permeates the music. Thus (a), taken from the folksong "I'm to be married on a Tuesday morning," which introduces the first act, lends backbone, as it were, to everything he says or does and gives a lift to the opening "Cotsall" theme (out of which the mob remembers and repeats (b) later on as "Spy, French spy"), while (c) is the gist of Mary's song "In the night-time." Almost every-

thing is turned to use; Hugh's satire about "Pretty linnet, hop in it" becomes his pæan "You are mine at last," and the mob that taunted John ("O the cock has had his comb cut") five minutes later taunts Hugh ("They'll hang him in the morning") to the same tune.

Hugh wins the prize fight, of course; he couldn't help that; but he also convinces the denizens of "this salubrious town" that they were all wrong in their poke-a-moke ideas, just as music is all wrong when it gets away from natural human feeling and instinct. That is the moral, if you want one, of this opera, just as the moral of the *Meister-singer* was that music obeys rules best when it breaks them. You may not like that moral, and in that case you will not like folksong. You will call it a craze, a pose, a worn out coat, and not allow it the virtues of its vices. Let us look at it temperately. A great deal of it—five-sixths is a favourite estimate—is witless; no brains went to the making of it. That may well be; little brains goes to the making of nine-tenths of the things we do; we prefer to rely on a thing we call commonsense. Let us take it that only one folksong in six is worth listening to; but folksongs were made not to be listened to but to be sung, and "the ring of words When the right man rings them" is quite a different thing from their intrinsic beauty. The object of folksong is to provide tunes that the right man *can* sing, as opposed to others that he can only listen to. Take a good one. "The Wraggle-Taggle Gipsies" is a first-class tune, but I should be glad never to hear it again, because I am tired of it. Yet if you will get a chorus going so that I am quite sure no one will hear my contribution, I shall be very glad to be allowed to sing the refrain; and the important point is that I know that I can, which is not the case with the "Air de Lia" or the tune from the *Coq d'Or*.

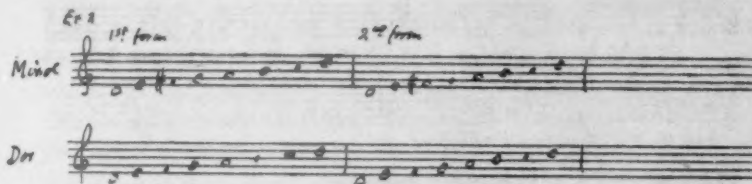
But then what room is there in opera for tunes that are only meant to be sung, if we can't take part in the singing? The plain man's obstacle in opera is the mass of conventions he has to swallow. That people should go through the day singing everything they do is baulking enough, but that they should sing to such intricate music increases his surprise a good deal. Hence to a very large number of people opera that they understand means *Faust*, where the music is perfectly obvious. What makes it obvious is not the handling but the vocabulary. The musical phrases are all familiar, we have heard them in all sorts of other contexts and we feel as if we know what they "mean." When they are sung to us, we can imagine ourselves singing them. They are like the conversation of a friend—full of tags that we recognise immediately, and can go on at once and see what he does with them. Folksong has the similar merit that it

presupposes no knowledge of music at large. It comes at us with a clear statement and talks about things we know quite well. How much more, for instance, Palestrina and Byrd must mean to one of their own Church to whom the great Latin hymn tunes are full of associations than to us who have to hunt them up in books, and then perhaps not find them, still less feel them!

Then to turn to the composer's side of the matter, where is he to find, in the absence of any continuous body of music in his own country, that musical vocabulary which everyone will immediately understand? To fall in love first with Italian and then with German music, and lately to flirt with French and Russian, does not answer the question. Of our own music we might think of Byrd and his peers, but they wrote for the age of faith and we live (save the mark!) in the age of reason; besides, our acquaintance with them is too recent to have made any great impression yet. Purcell left no school, and the little we know of his music we are content to praise rather than perform; besides, Dr. Grattan Flood says he was an Irishman. We need not go on; it is enough that Wembley, abundantly anxious to find music that everyone would recognise as English, failed, and had to be content with a few things written by Englishmen—quite another matter. Then, we hear nothing all day except music hall ditties filtered through street organs, and Anglican hymns on Sundays; the use of hymns in opera is strictly limited, and the ditties are so ephemeral that by the time the opera was produced (in this case ten years) they would be out of date.

Folksong fills the gap. It is true that it is rather a new love to those now living, but there are lines in its face which appeal to our sense of beauty, and it has "good havings," as we say in the West. It would be easy to make a list of a dozen collectors besides Sharp and of a dozen composers besides Vaughan Williams; but these two made it a passion. What attracted them first, possibly, as it attracts almost everyone, was the novelty and quaintness of the "modes." But there is a deeper attraction than that, as I submit with deference. We should all agree that chromatic music is, broadly speaking, emotional (in the slang sense) and even motley as compared with diatonic, which is strong and staid. Similarly the passage from diatonic to pentatonic is towards severity and simplicity. Folksong is written in veiled pentatonics. Even a song like "Dashing away with the Smoothing Iron," which contains all seven notes of the scale, bears less hardly on two of them, or sharpens or flattens them occasionally, or does not permit them at a close. When a melody treats these two notes equally with the others it ceases to be a folk-

song. But now, which two? For brevity's sake we take the two commonest modes in this country and indeed all over the world, the Mixolydian and Dorian:



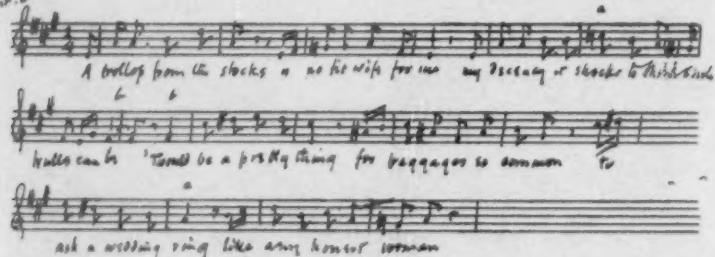
These are what Boyce's Cathedral Music (1760-78) calls "D with the greater third" and "D with the lesser third," and it is in these that Bach and Handel wrote much of their early work, rather than in major or minor. The 1st and 2nd forms, as given above, are obtained by writing out the Ecclesiastical Tone (as played on the "white" notes) first and its normal and second in its "transposed" position, and marking F and B as weak notes (shown here by the black heads).^{*} It seems worth while to go a little into technical aspect of the modes, because it is generally supposed that what constitutes the difference between them is which notes are raised or lowered. The view here put is that the "accidentals" are accidents, and that the essence of the matter is where the weak notes come—in other words, which kind of pentatone we are dealing with. If this is so, then to espouse the cause of folksong is not to try to put back the hands of the clock of fashion but to hark back to first principles; it is a logical entrenchment, not a historical throw-back.

Vaughan Williams has a way of his own with folksong. The law of that was that the song must never leave its mode; it could not, in fact, without courting obscurantism! Key was not yet invented. There was no apparatus for it—none of that harmony which makes a melody recognizable at any higher or lower level to which the modulation may have led. Consequently folksongs seldom repeat phrases at higher or lower levels, and their possibilities of structural complication are accordingly limited. But for us who have key firmly established—or, at least, those of us who have not already discarded it as a relic of hoary antiquity—there is no reason why it shouldn't be superinduced upon mode; and that is what is done here, as in "Wenlock Edge." To take a humorous instance, John the Butcher has no proper feeling

^{*} We see therefore that the transposed scales differed from the others not merely in pitch but in their constitution. That the Church appreciated the distinction is shown by their successive rules for the Dominant of the Third Tone (Phrygian)—first, that it should be the 6th and, afterwards, the 5th of the scale; for, of course, the transposed scales were the later invention.

about folksong—or anything else—and when he tries to sing a plain-sailing Mixolydian (A major with G♯)—

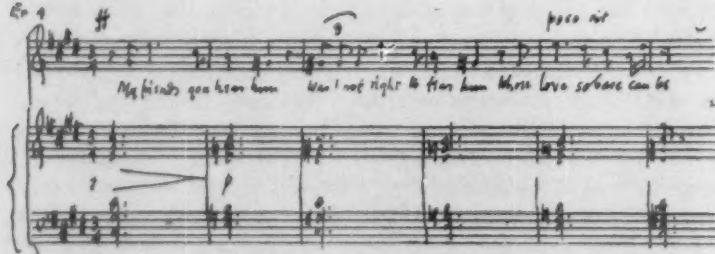
Ex. 2



—he starts off all right for the first half, except that at (a) his voice won't quite run to it, and he sings flat. He arrives safely ("can be") at a recognised stopping place, the sixth of the scale; but the pause there makes him take it for his tonic, and he goes gaily on at the new pitch with "'Twould be" until he comes to (c), which he again sings flat (it should be A♯); and so good luck rather than skill brings him safe home again. The humour of it lies in the fact that this is exactly what the poorer kind of folk-songster does, whose aberrations are then duly "collected" as "interesting variants."

That is a change in the pitch of a *mode*; it, or his words, or both, have agitated Mary a good deal, and her agitation is expressed by alternations of *key*—

Ex. 3



—where E♮ is constant throughout, and is taken first as the fourth of the Dorian-on-C♯ and then as the second of the Dorian-on-E♮. But the fifth bar has a complication which mode alone could never have accomplished; for the accompaniment says clearly Dorian-on-E and the voice as clearly Dorian-on-C♯, and the D in that bar ought to be ♮ for the one and ♯ for the other, a violence of opposition which only key can reconcile.

There are ten actual traditional tunes in the opera, and one is rather surprised to find so many; the rest are "faked," as people call

it. Faking is a game we have all tried on our collector friends just to see whether knowledge was added to enthusiasm, and it generally came off, because, as folksong has no date and no ascertained purpose, anything might be anyhow. But there is more than a little art in faking a folksong with the purpose of characterising; and, besides, being beautiful music, there is not one of the melodies in this opera which does not fall quite naturally from the mouth in which it is put. After Hugh, for instance, has sung his two songs, about the linnet and about the horses, we feel we know exactly the kind of sterling, reticent fellow he is, even if, as is apt to be the case, we catch no more of the words than has just been given. At any rate, when the writer first heard it at the Royal College the only additional fact was a knowledge of the kind of virtues the composer would be likely to admire, and the music seemed to be telling that part of the story that matters—how people feel.

It is sad that Cecil Sharp did not live long enough to hear this; it would have seemed to him to put a crown on his own labours. He did not profess to understand Vaughan Williams's later work, but he was a heart-whole admirer of his earlier, to which this belongs; and he would have hailed the hope that is in it of a music that we had not borrowed, or submitted to, from without, but which was entirely our own. He loved these folk tunes no less for their own sake than for the sake of the people who sang them; he loved them for their cleanness and conciseness, for something we might call their untidiness, which is imagination getting the better of convention, and for their saying the essentials in the fewest words. They are, at any rate, in striking contrast to much of the music that is made to-day in which the words are numerous and the essentials scarce. But it is not merely a question of the number of words; it is a question of their quality and weight. Ravel and Debussy, to take two types, are both admirable examples of economy, their music sounds as if a stern self-criticism had deleted every superfluous note; but Ravel moves his notes and chords and phrases as a general might move troops, each with a definite objective, and Debussy, as a tactful hostess might bring guests together or steer them apart at a garden party, to induce a vague feeling of *bien-être*. Ravel is setting their specific qualities in relief, Debussy is winning by the juxtaposition of those qualities a super-quality which inheres in none of them singly. Which we prefer is a matter of taste. The former is the method of folksong, and that, after all has been said for and against, also remains a matter of taste.

A. H. FOX STRANGWAYS.

MUSICAL PARLANCE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE—II.

In the last number our enquiry paused on the threshold of the Augustan age. Musical parlance of the imaginative kind does not, of course, flourish along the well-ordered paths of eighteenth century literature. Dryden looks both ways: back to the fruitful times, forward to the barren ones. In his *Song for Saint Cecilia's Day* we have already noted a reverberation of that doctrine of Christian Platonism, the "music of the spheres." This noble old conception, the source of Milton's finest musical imagery, and of some of Shakespeare's, became after Dryden a lifeless convention. No poet of the new century was worthy of it; not until the romantic age was its virtue kindled anew. Dryden, in so far as he looks forward, prepares us for poorer things. In the ode already mentioned he recounts the stock emotional qualities of various instruments, and startles the incautious reader with his "sharp violins." These are, in fact, a portent. The days of the old viola were numbered; with them went the vogue of madrigal singing, the privacy of the old music-makings, when amateurs met for the joy of the art alone. In the train of the "violons du Roy" came gradually other phenomena—the decline of our Church music, the development of the orchestra, the rise of opera. For mild as the "fury" and the "indignation" of Dryden's violins would seem to us, such emotions are of the order which calls for stage-room. There arose the spoiled *prima donna* and *primo uomo*, the fashionable audience; the day of publicity and showmanship in music had dawned.

Masques had prepared the way; Bacon, in writing about them, had treated music frankly as one of a number of stately "toys," on a level with dancing and costume and scenic display. Dryden viewed opera with a scornful tolerance, and collaborated with Purcell. Writers learned to use easily the current terms of the operatic and solo vocal vocabularies. Also—for the century had robust common-sense—a host of writers, from the greatest to the least, joined in the merry game of opera-baiting. From this kind of writing, in default of better, our examples of musical parlance have to be taken. Addison's delicious banter of the "lion in *Hydaspes*" (*L'Idaspe fidele*, an Italian opera by Mancini) is well known. Not so familiar, perhaps,

is the fun he made in the 18th *Spectator* of certain clumsily fitted translations: "I have known the word And pursu'd through the whole Gamut, have been entertain'd with many a melodious The, and have heard the most beautiful Graces, Quavers and Divisions bestowed upon Then, For and From; to the eternal Honour of our English Particles." There is more malice in a letter of Horace Walpole, written in 1748, when the first craze for opera had abated, and Handel had turned to oratorio. We make a quotation, not to endorse the malice, but to show the writer's aptness in the use of technical terms: "Handel has set up an Oratorio against the Operas, and succeeds. He has hired all the goddesses from farces, and the singers of 'Roast Beef' from between the acts at both theatres. . . . and so they sing, and make brave hallelujahs; and the good company encore the recitative, if it happens to have any cadence like what they call a tune." Writing still later, in 1759, Goldsmith does more than denounce the operatic singers, with their *fiorituri* and their consuming ostentation; he points out with perfect precision the radical defect of the music they sing: "Our composers should affect greater simplicity . . . let them avoid ornamenting a barren groundwork; let them not attempt by flourishing to cheat us of solid harmony."

That this critical attitude (salutary, if at times superficial), and this easy wielding of the simplest technical language, should in time overflow into prose fiction is not to be wondered at. Music meant little to Richardson or Fielding; but Fanny Burney had her own ideas about it. These were not always the ideas of her father, the historian of music, who praised so many worthless Italian operas. When Evelina, with her relations the Branghtons, pays a visit to the Haymarket, this is one impression left by the performance on the mind of a commonplace young man:

" 'But pray, Miss,' said the son, 'what makes that fellow look so doleful while he's singing?'

" 'Probably because the character he performs is in distress.'

" 'Why, then, I think he might as well let alone singing till he's in better cue; it's out of all nature for a man to be piping when he's in distress. For my part, I never sing but when I'm merry; yet I love a song as well as most people.' "

This, no doubt, is the hit of a vulgarian; but it leaves the fundamental convention of opera reeling. Let us not be too certain that Miss Burney is only laughing at young Branghton.

We pass from social aspects—the prose of our subject—and search for its poetry. Few writers, between Dryden and Blake, could make

an imaginative use of musical metaphor. Few knew how to listen; or, if they did, immediately they stiffened their impressions in the starch of their "poetic diction," or muffled them in abstractions. Gray had a genuine interest in music; though we should hardly infer it when he writes of the "pealing anthem" that "swells the note of praise." Collins has some inklings; the "simple bell" in his *Ode to Evening* strikes on senses which have been made responsive by delicate, vital impressions of sight and sound. His ode on *The Passions* is not all convention; at its end he pleads highly for strength and simplicity in music. With Cowper, we come to deeper things. He makes us hear the bells over Olney, as their tones ebb and flow with the wind. With the moods of his tortured soul we are bound to sympathise, for he can really sing of them. In his hymns, a fearful joy of conviction transfigures the much-used Biblical imagery, as he tells of the golden harp

"Strung and tuned for endless years,
And formed by power divine."

We rejoice with him in his "seasons of clear shining" until the waves of his madness and his Calvinism overwhelm him at last.

A quickening of the senses and of the emotions came with the dawn of the romantic age. Blake sees with tremendous vividness; his poetic hearing, at times, has a corresponding intensity. Sounds dart down on him as from a cloud, or float to him on the wind; he pipes clear headlong tunes (as in the prelude to the *Songs of Innocence*) which are only learned in the land where Ariel is music-master. For him the mere bleating of a lamb makes "all the vales rejoice." In splendid irony, the "languid strings," of which he wrote in his song to the Muses, awoke and sounded with a greater range of harmony, if with a less supreme splendour in their highest strains, than in the time of the Elizabethans. They sang of a renewed sense of wonder in Nature, in the supernatural, in past ages, in ballad and story; stirred by the upheaval of the Revolution, they sang of liberty and the brotherhood of human hearts. Music floods even those romantic poets who have not the deepest things to sing of: Scott, with his gallant horns and pibrochs and the poignant wood-notes of "Proud Maisie"; even Moore, whose lines, whatever their weaknesses, often float, and whose little poem "Echoes" reflects perfectly in sound and in metre its mood of youthful romance waking to the music of "horn or lute or soft guitar." We pass on to the four major poets of the period, remembering that between them they mustered no technical knowledge of music worth mentioning.

The significance of the art for them, as for other poets, merges itself into the larger question of how they used their sense of hearing in poetry.

To Wordsworth, the sounds of his Lakeland were voices of a living, sentient Nature. They had for him a twofold eloquence—of immediate impression, and of stored and cherished recollection. When he is deeply moved, and only then, these sounds add their own depths of wonder to his poetry, as do for example the "twofold shout" of the cuckoo, the cataract which haunted him "like a passion," the "murmuring sound" of the rivulet, whose beauty was to "pass into the face" of the child brought up by Nature. Once a chance incident flooded him with a sense of the power of song truly overwhelming. He passed a Highland girl reaping and singing "a melancholy strain." As the sound possessed the air, it carried his mind to distant places, where other sounds rang out to him as if in airy counterpoints over the main melody:

" No nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In springtime from the cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides."

What was she singing? Again his mind took a leap, and rolled history up for us into a scroll of two short lines:

" Old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago."

Yet these transitions do not blur, they enhance the main impression of the lonely bending figure under the sky, and of the air flooded with an intangible rain of sound. Give the girl a song—the most likely Highland folk-melody you happen to know—and the impression is marred. Definite notes take too strong a hold of it. We are driven to conclude that here the poet has laid bare an ultimate mystery, inexplicable as reed-music was to the cave-man—just the power and the pathos of human song, which may strike us at a classical concert, or may strike us as the most careless snatch of tune floats in at our window from some passing roysterer in the street at night.

Coleridge, sailing on stranger but not more wonderful seas, brought

back into our poetry the supernatural conception of music. In the *Ancient Mariner*, the main series of musical allusions occurs where the "troop of spirits blest" rises from the bodies of the mariner's dead comrades, and the angelic singing pours down to him from the sky, now "like all instruments," now "like a lonely flute." As a last magic change, it leaves a soft hum in the sails of the ship, thus drawing from the poet his loveliest simile, that of the "hidden brook in the leafy month of June." Here, of course, music has another of its old functions, that of soothing and refreshment, never so welcome to our senses as just now, after the terrors that have gone before. *Kubla Khan*, beginning as pure vision, calls in more and more aid from aural images as it runs its brief course. In the end the poet expressly invokes the "symphony and song" of the "damsel with a dulcimer," so that he may realise his conception. "With music loud and long" he "would build his dome in air," thus recreating for us with a new strangeness the myth of Amphion whose music built the city of Thebes. It was left to Shelley to revive, in his own impalpable way, the Pythagorean and Platonic notions of cosmic music. In some lines from the poem "To a lady with a Guitar" he draws on these notions, saying of the instrument:

"For it hath learnt all harmonies
Of the plains and of the skies,
Of the forests and the mountains,
And the many-voiced fountains . . .
And pattering rain, and breathing dew,
And airs of evening; and it knew
That seldom-heard mysterious sound
Which, driven on its diurnal round,
As it floats through boundless day,
Our world enkindles on its way."

In these few lines, the poet's fancy leaps characteristically from earthly objects to cosmic conceptions. His imagination has a glancing quality which tends to leave his ideas "dark with excessive bright." He is happier ranging among the spheres than he is on earth; in divine snatches he lets us hear their music, or he creates beings to inhabit them and lets us hear their songs. Lyrics such as those of the Echoes in *Prometheus Unbound* have been likened by one of our leading critics to "inexhaustible showers of light raining from some magic urn." It is significant that this comparison comes from a visual, not an aural source; music in Shelley so often suggests an emanation of light. Even the well-known ode *To a Skylark* is

an example. In this poem the visual images overpower the aural ones. And never was there so impalpable—we had nearly said so inaudible—a bird. A radiant point, beyond sight as above human sorrow, it is beyond all but the keenest hearing. Earth and air, we are told, are loud with its voice; it sings like a poet, or like a maiden making music in her bower. Still, these stock images do not help us to hear it; we can hardly say whether the keen arrows flowing down from it are arrows of sound or of light. For in Shelley all sense-impressions are etherealised, and merge in the "universal sun."

It is a relief to come back to the poetry of Keats, full of the murmurs of a Southern English summer. His best aural impressions are incomparable in the richness of their word-music, in "wafted" quality, and in the play they leave to the imagination. If the palm were offered for the most musical short line in English, few could rival, in beauty of sound and suggestion, that one from the *Fancy* ode:—

" Distant harvest-carols clear."

In *Hyperion* he, too, catches hints of sphere-music, and his lines roll and wheel in a softened echo of Milton's; here and there, also, in this poem, are sound-similes the elder poet might have liked, as when, in a deliberation of the fallen gods, the voice of Saturn "grows up" like the sounds of an organ after the frailer notes of the other speakers. In the *Eve of Saint Agnes* there is a lightly-touched-in background of festal music, against which the main action stands out; this disposition of scene is found not infrequently later, in the *Prae-Raphaelites*. They, too, accepted literally, in not a few of their descriptions, the now hackneyed dictum of Keats about the sweetness of "unheard" melodies. In his *Ode on a Grecian Urn* he mentions pipes and timbrels and a player. He leaves them as mere figures in a group; we are to imagine their music. It is to be, he says, a "ditty of no tone"; presumably, then, it is to be the merest aura, or wraith of piping, no succession even of unuttered notes such as most people could, at will, "think over" in their minds. It must float about the figures; interpenetrate them, as the unheard notes of a lute might seem to do on a Rossetti picture. A ghostly sound-impression, surely, thus filtered through two senses!

Some poor lines in a verse epistle of Keats throw light on musical fashions in late Georgian England. He could luxuriate in "divine Mozart"; Arne delighted him; Handel, his vogue now in fullest rage, could "madden" him. And sentimental drawing-rooms were now melting to the "Song of Erin." Italian opera flourished yet;

choral societies ground out Handel and neo-Handelianism. In successive waves, the German classics had affected our serious musicians; the second master-wave, that of Mendelssohn, was soon to arrive. That a literary man should know anything of music entered few people's heads. The great prose writers of the day had little use for it; though the devout "Agnist" will always believe that, in spite of the "Chapter on Ears," and that comminatory jingle about composers, Lamb really had an "undeveloped faculty of music" in him. De Quincey, who, though no performer, was a delighted listener, joined the number of writers who have helped to spread a loose figurative use of musical terminology. Riding on the box of a mail-coach at night, with the driver asleep, by a shout he just saved a young man and woman in a gig from certain death. The shock of the incident, working on an opium-ridden brain, produced, among other studies, his *Dream Fugue*, a sea of rolling sumptuous language, a fantasy in which the young woman of the incident is seen in all manner of perilous situations. The images which came to him, were, he tells us, "tumultuous and changing as a musical fugue." But a fugue need not be "tumultuous," and changes, of whatever kind, are as characteristic of other musical forms as of fugues. No matter: De Quincey sent the word a stage further on the gay career of figurative misuse which it runs to-day.

Of the social, or domestic, aspects of music we get many hints in contemporary fiction. One test of a desirable person, in Jane Austen, is that he or she can listen in silence to singing or playing. If you talk through it, or ask for a certain song when it has just been sung, then you are no desirable person; her searchlight is on you, remorselessly. The general ignorance of music was still sufficiently complete. At best, in most households, the art was a pretty accomplishment, on a level with needlework; so much we infer in nooks and corners of Dickens. Or, worse, it was a marvellous trick, to be displayed to a gaping world. Still, if it had not been that, we should never have known Thackeray's description of Miss Wirt, the governess at Major Ponto's, and her playing of those variations on "Sich a Gettin' up Stairs":—

"When she had banged out the tune slowly, she began a different manner of 'Gettin' up Stairs,' and did so with a fury and swiftness quite incredible. She spun up stairs; she whirled up stairs; she galloped up stairs; she rattled up stairs; and then, having got the tune to the top landing, as it were, she hurled it down again shrieking to the bottom floor. . . . Then Miss Wirt played the 'Gettin' up Stairs' with the most pathetic and ravishing solemnity: plaintiff moans and sobs issued from the

keys—you wept and trembled as you were gettin' up stairs. Miss Wirt's hands seemed to faint and wail and die in variations: again, and she went up with a savage clang and rush of trumpets, as if Miss Wirt was storming a breach."

This happens in would-be high society—Thackeray's country Snobland. While laughing, not too unkindly, at the pretentious performance, Mr. Snob is clearly impressed by the technique of it. With that unfailing modesty of his, he admits that he knows nothing of music. Yet even had he known more, he might have been excused for marvelling at those forgotten "fireworks" our grandmothers used to play. Brilliant pianoforte technique, even when musically worthless, fell more freshly on the ear then than now. But the chief virtue of our quotation is surely the descriptive precision with which the "unmusical" author makes the variations live for us. He barely uses a technical term; he knows better. Yet, given the tune, anyone with a little talent for extemporisation, and a knowledge of a few stock keyboard formulæ, might concoct the whole thing, or a twin brother to it, by following Thackeray's prescription.

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choral societies ground out Handel and neo-Handelianism. In successive waves, the German classics had affected our serious musicians; the second master-wave, that of Mendelssohn, was soon to arrive. That a literary man should know anything of music entered few people's heads. The great prose writers of the day had little use for it; though the devout "Agnist" will always believe that, in spite of the "Chapter on Ears," and that comminatory jingle about composers, Lamb really had an "undeveloped faculty of music" in him. De Quincey, who, though no performer, was a delighted listener, joined the number of writers who have helped to spread a loose figurative use of musical terminology. Riding on the box of a mail-coach at night, with the driver asleep, by a shout he just saved a young man and woman in a gig from certain death. The shock of the incident, working on an opium-ridden brain, produced, among other studies, his *Dream Fugue*, a sea of rolling sumptuous language, a fantasy in which the young woman of the incident is seen in all manner of perilous situations. The images which came to him, were, he tells us, "tumultuous and changing as a musical fugue." But a fugue need not be "tumultuous," and changes, of whatever kind, are as characteristic of other musical forms as of fugues. No matter: De Quincey sent the word a stage further on the gay career of figurative misuse which it runs to-day.

Of the social, or domestic, aspects of music we get many hints in contemporary fiction. One test of a desirable person, in Jane Austen, is that he or she can listen in silence to singing or playing. If you talk through it, or ask for a certain song when it has just been sung, then you are no desirable person; her searchlight is on you, remorselessly. The general ignorance of music was still sufficiently complete. At best, in most households, the art was a pretty accomplishment, on a level with needlework; so much we infer in nooks and corners of Dickens. Or, worse, it was a marvellous trick, to be displayed to a gaping world. Still, if it had not been that, we should never have known Thackeray's description of Miss Wirt, the governess at Major Ponto's, and her playing of those variations on "Sich a Gettin' up Stairs":—

"When she had banged out the tune slowly, she began a different manner of 'Gettin' up Stairs,' and did so with a fury and swiftness quite incredible. She spun up stairs; she whirled up stairs; she galloped up stairs; she rattled up stairs; and then, having got the tune to the top landing, as it were, she hurled it down again shrieking to the bottom floor. . . . Then Miss Wirt played the 'Gettin' up Stairs' with the most pathetic and ravishing solemnity: plaintiff moans and sobs issued from the

keys—you wept and trembled as you were gettin' up stairs. Miss Wirt's hands seemed to faint and wail and die in variations: again, and she went up with a savage clang and rush of trumpets, as if Miss Wirt was storming a breach."

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of actual music filters through two senses, as we noted of that passage in Keats. And this despite the rich, if cloying, verbal sound. In the sonnet "Passion and Worship," for instance, we see the hautboy and harp as clearly as we hear them. Sometimes, though, as in the "Sea-Limits," he can listen, and catch the mystery of elemental sounds; and through the bright pictured web of the *Blessed Damozel* snatches of sphere-music and celestial song float down to him. Swinburne's lines boom and roll and rock; how much of him is "words, words, words"! With all his tremendous faculty for metre, he can rarely listen. It is not easy to listen, up to the chin in surges, or to render sound-impressions truly, with the battering of waves in your brain. He was a swimmer, and he died deaf; which things are an allegory. Pater, the critic into whom much of the Præ-Raphaelite spirit entered, embodies now and then in his writing the tendency to "pictured" music noted in Keats and Rossetti. Curious about the art, and sensitive to it, he invokes its help effectively in his famous description of "La Gioconda." The many experiences, so strange and remote, which he can read in this pictured face, have been to the woman, he tells us, "as the sound of lyres and flutes"; the sudden comparison gives the description a new eloquence, more light and air. Pater treads gingerly, and at times clumsily, on technical ground. All the same, he was the first great English critic who deigned to write of music as a sister, a true peer, of the other arts. His assertion that all these "constantly aspire towards the condition of music" is now seen to be sweeping, and vague in its implications. Had there been a vigorous musical life in the Oxford of his day he would have known more; and the foundations of æsthetic criticism might have been fully laid.

In Browning we find a union of two things hardly known since Milton, passionate idealistic feeling ready to express itself in musical metaphor, and a grasp of realistic, technical fact. Indeed, his musical "shop" is often lavish; he squanders it as he does his artistic "shop"; mostly through sheer gusto; a little, perhaps, through ostentation. In a poem like "Youth and Art," light and gallant, with a sting at the core of it, a singer talks of old days when, a lone aspirant for fame, she "shook upon E in alt" so that the young sculptor near by might not forget her existence; this is characteristic and jolly. Grotesque as is much of the organ "shop" in *Master Hugues of Saxe Gotha*, the poet roughs out a description of a crabbed five-voice fugue unique in its humorous zest. The only misgiving felt by the musician is that Browning has scampered off with the lay superstition that all fugues are crabbed; or, at least, that he has implied as much. But "Heaven's earnest eye," and the "far land" of which he sings, are never obscured by ingenuity, in the best fugues.

The far land itself is the goal of their striving, and cleverness is sternly kept in its place. *Abt Vogler*, of course, is the crown of these poems on music. The surging metre reflects the mighty aspiration of the organ player, who has extemporised wonderful music and is dismayed at the thought that it is gone. But the intuition comes to him that "there shall never be one lost good," and he is comforted. The opening comparison of his conception to a palace, worked out in splendid detail, with hints of a true understanding of contrapuntal music: the glance at the ultimate mystery of an art which out of three sounds can frame a star: the quiet, mystic simplicity of "'tis we musicians know": these are all triumphs. But the last stanza is impaired by vague use of technical language of which it is impossible for any musician to make sense. Browning's fancy for "shop" over-reached itself; outran his knowledge; and the result is a flaw in a well-nigh perfect poem.

It is remarkable how many of the threads of our study are drawn together in Meredith's work. The absorbing topic of opera, now more than a century old, was caught up by him in *Vittoria* to undreamed-of heights. In this novel, and in its prelude *Sandra Belloni*, we have a full-length portrait of an artist-soul; an Italian girl, a born singer, who grows through many trials and sorrows to the full stature of a patriot, the symbol of a reborn Italy. Treading warily, with many a telling stroke of fact to keep its idealism on earth, Meredith almost makes us believe in that scene in "La Scala," where the heroine, singing in an allusive opera, gives the signal for Milan to rise. The impresario, Antonio Pericles, who discovered Vittoria, and to whom love and patriotism are as dust in the balance compared with the preserving of her voice, is a triumph of the Meredithian grotesque. In *One of our Conquerors*, musical life in English country-houses is treated with admirable knowledge and sympathy, and used over and over again to enforce traits of character. Victor Radnor, conducting his amateur orchestra in the "brisk" Overture to *Zampa*, duetting in Donizetti with his daughter, or in Mercadante on the flute with Dudley Sowerby, enjoying his "dear old Corelli," or the "rattling heavens and swaying forests of Beethoven" is a figure of splendid futility; under all this gay life there is a hidden mine of tragedy and death. Throughout his novels Meredith goes warily with technical language; he never throws it about with the gusto of Browning, and his slips are remarkably few. Always, when possible, he bathes talk on music in his rainbow of imaginative metaphor, not in drab, dangerous colours of quaver and crotchet.

He joins hands, too, with those poets we have mentioned, who from Cowper to Blake, from Shelley to Tennyson and Browning, can listen,

and sing of what they hear. And how real, beside that of Shelley's, is the song of Meredith's lark!

"Shrill, irreflective, unrestrained,
Rapt, ringing, on the jet sustained
Without a break, without a fall,
Sweet-silvery, sheer lyrical,
Perennial, quavering up the chord
Like myriad dewdrops of sunny sward
That trembling into fulness shine,
And sparkle dropping argentine."

The metre itself is a "jet," kept up with incredible skill; a virtuosity of fancy to match the natural virtuosity of the bird; the lines have the continuous sparkling flow and yet the endless series of tiny recommencements that we hear in its song. If here, again, "earth and air are loud" with its voice, they are loud in response to it, in sympathy with its joy; there is no shuttle-flight, of a baffled alien spirit, like Shelley's, between earth and heaven. Meredith draws on a full, spontaneous flow of aural epithets, figures, comparisons, to make us hear those silvery tones; he flies off to images from the other senses, not in despair, but from fulness of delight. Towards the end of the poem—good Victorian that he is—his style gets gritty, and he gives us a "message." But it would be ungracious to complain. Seldom, indeed, does he sing as he does here; too often, as Professor Elton has put it, his lyre is "almost thrashed"; his English, "past praying for." Yet he could hear the "chirp of Ariel"; Surrey's earth, for which his love was so deep that utmost mystery seemed enshrined in it, might any day become for him Prospero's enchanted island. "Sounds and sweet airs" would come to him, as they did to Caliban; they blew once to him, in his old age, through dry sedges; and, without a voice, with a mere sigh, filled him with the sense of that ultimate mystery of music, which can be felt and taken into one's being, but never explained:—

"They have no song, the sedges dry,
And still they sing;
It is within my breast they sing,
As I pass by.
Within my breast they touch a string,
They wake a sigh,
There is but sound of sedges dry;
In me they sing."

W. WRIGHT ROBERTS.

(To be continued.)

THE CLAIMS OF TONIC SOLFA—I

THE days of bitter controversy over the precedence of the rival methods of writing music are long past, and the dream, fondly indulged in a few years ago, that the standard notation would eventually wither and die to make room for the newer, has faded. The Editor's invitation to marshal the facts on the one side can therefore be undertaken calmly and dispassionately, all the more that the writer does not use solfa himself, but has merely advocated its retention for certain branches of musical education.

Letter notation is a system devised to contain the fewest signs used in the simplest way, without redundancies or ambiguities. Staff notation is complicated; but complicated though it is we love the look of a page of a Mozart Symphony or a Bach Prelude because we are thinking of what these queer symbols stand for, not because they look beautiful in themselves. Moreover, Mozart and Bach appeal to us in actual performance none the less if we have forgotten the look of the printed page; indeed, their emotional effect is often greater thus. One recalls John Curwen's immortal answer to a man who angrily said that a staff volume was music and a solfa volume was not. He held the former to his ear, saying quietly, "Is it music? I cannot hear it." In considering the claims of the rival notations we must put sentiment on one side.

This visible beauty that we think we find in a page of staff notation is analogous to the audible beauty we know we find in the English language. We cannot claim that the actual sound of English speech, dear as it is to us all, is more beautiful than other tongues. Heard side by side with sonorous Italian, liquid Gaelic, musical French, it appears crude and angular. But it is the speech of our childhood and adolescence. Common words recall memories and stimulate our imagination, and men of genius have grouped sounds and shaped sentences so that we are continually moved and thrilled. Good prose and poetry combine inseparably beauty of thought with beauty of sound. We see this if we read familiar literature in a foreign translation; we may be interested, but we are not "stirred as with the sound of a trumpet," as was Sir Philip Sidney on hearing the ballad of "Chevy Chase." Similarly, neither the staff nor any other notation is in itself beautiful; but its interpretation is, and we transfer the beauty from sound to sight.

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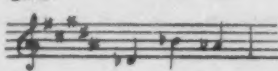
If we view the question of the methods of writing music over any long period we see that they are continually in a state of flux, and the question of the original manner of noting the music does not influence us when we hear it. We enjoy a Madrigal of Wilbye no less because singers use copies which have been transcribed from what is now, save to experts, unreadable Tudor script. We are impressed with Gregorian chant even though the notation conveys nothing to us.

We have no more justification in imposing the notation with which we are familiar upon our children than have the Anti-Metric Society the right to decree that millions of young people must waste a great part of their best years in learning our ridiculous system of weights and measures.

Tonic solfa reduces the number of signs to a minimum. For pitch, 7 letter-names for the notes of the major scale, and 10 for the inflected notes of the minor scale and chromatics are sufficient. Add to these octave marks, above and below, and the signs for key and modulation, and the roll is complete. In the early days of instrumental instruction a child spells out notes, which convey to his ear musical sounds only after they are played. In solfa sounds are related to each other from the very beginning; simple progressions are heard and known first, and then the sight of the signs calls the sounds to his ear at once. If a young pianist is asked to sing C A G, the names are first translated mentally into positions on the keyboard, and then (if they can be sung at all) are reproduced. The mental process is indirect. It is akin to preparing every word and thinking out rules of grammar when translating a sentence into a foreign language. Modern language methods teach children to think in the new idiom. If a young solfaist is asked to sing d l s, the names call up the tune immediately. There is no intervening process of thought. Training of the ear is one of the cardinal points in musical education, solfa teaching aims at that first and foremost, it begins every step.

A bedrock principle is that when a modulation of any extent occurs the keynote is changed, and all sounds are thus related correctly to the prevailing tonic. Slight changes are not marked in this way. In staff, changes of key signature occur only occasionally in the course of a movement, with the result that for line after line the only function of the key signature is to increase the number of accidentals. A young musician encountering this

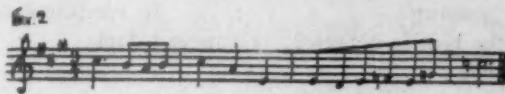
Ex. 1



has to spell it out, note by note. The new key is only appreciated when the music is familiar, if then. A solfaist omits the five sharps and calls the passage *d l s*. Nine-tenths of the stumbling blocks in choral singing are destroyed by this plan. The late Stephen Hawley edited a number of classics for the piano in which key signatures were changed frequently. Hundreds of accidentals were swept away, and many apparently difficult passages proved to be quite easy. Every teacher simplifies his pupils' tasks by pointing out that certain passages may be readily mastered if it is remembered that they are in keys foreign to the signature. No doubt an experienced musician does it instinctively, but this ability, except with very gifted people, only comes after years of hard work.

The method of indicating modulations, or "removes," in solfa parlance, is the first real stumbling block to the student of the notation, and to the staffist it seems to make easy passages difficult. But while it may complicate matters at first, it eventually clears away numberless tangled areas of obstructing undergrowth. The staffist moving through the method step by step can only see what is close to him; when he eventually sees the whole in a suitable perspective, he realises clearly that the longer view is the correct one. The plan is as follows: Where a change of key occurs, one note is considered as the pivot on which the swing occurs. It is given a double name; that in small print belongs to the first key, that in large to the coming key. The new key is indicated, and the "distinguishing tones," that is, the notes in the new scale which are foreign to the old, are given. If the movement is towards the positive side, the new notes are shown on the right of the key note; if to the negative, on the other. This simple device not only warns the singer which notes are likely to prove troublesome, but indicates partially the difficulty of the modulation, because, generally speaking, a distant modulation requires more care than one to a closely related key.

In modern notation, if the remove introduces more than three distinguishing tones merely the number is given.



is written:—

A
| *n* :— : *r* : *d* *r* | *n* : *d* : *s*, | *a* *n* *r* : *n* *f* : *n* *s* | *d*' :— :— ||

s.d.f.C.

Experience with classes and choral societies clearly reveals that apparently difficult modulations are more quickly mastered through this device than when singers are groping blindly through a maze of accidentals. Naturally, in the rapid and passing modulations common to modern music there is a growing tendency to rely more upon chance chromatics than to change key incessantly. The mental effect of a passage is always the guide, as in all matters relating to solfa. Notation depends on the ear, not upon arbitrary rules.

It remains to be seen whether the present harmonic tendencies will destroy the key system which, though ever widening and developing, has governed music since the early days of the seventeenth century. But even if this comes to pass, the solfa notation of keyless passages is less complicated than the other, the continual contradiction of accidentals, such as C♯, C♭, is more simply expressed by *de*, *di*. It would be quite easy to pick out a number of isolated passages which are more easily read in staff, but many more could be selected to prove the opposite.

A common argument is that notes on the staff are pictorial in appearance, and convey to the mind the contour of a passage, whereas the horizontal arrangement of letter-names presents merely a dead level. But staff is not wholly consistent in this direction, octave signs and changes of clef disturb its continuity. Moreover, since the letters call up in the mind their position in the scale, pictorial representation is of small account. And the argument of pictorial representation rebounds against the combatant when the notation of time comes to be considered. A bar containing a single semibreve is short, one containing thirty-two demisemiquavers is long, so far as appearance on paper is concerned. All teachers know that students are prone to hurry over the bar which looks short and linger over the bar which looks long. In solfa all bars and beats throughout the same composition are equally spaced. Thus the long note looks long, and short notes are crowded together. All beats are shown distinctly and endless mental calculation is dispensed with. Nothing could be simpler than the signs used for bars of various groupings. Simple duple time is shown thus:—| : | Simple triple:—| : : | and simple quadruple:—| : | : |. In compound time, each division of the beat is indicated. Compound duple:—| : : | : : | compound triple:—| : : | : : | : : | and so on.

The notation of compound time is perhaps less satisfactory than that of simple, as a larger space has to be covered by the eye in the same length of time. The signs for beat-division are extremely simple. A dot halves a beat:— : d .d | a comma indicates the quarter:— : d, d, d, d | and an inverted comma the third:— : d, , d, d |

It is urged, possibly with some truth, that it is sometimes difficult to grasp quickly the notation for more complicated divisions of a beat, such as $\frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{4} \frac{1}{4}$, or $\frac{1}{4} \frac{1}{4} \frac{1}{4} \frac{1}{4}$, but it must not be forgotten that this criticism always comes from musicians who are less familiar with solfa than with staff, and who generally have to translate all but the simplest solfa signs into staff when reading. Anyone who uses solfa constantly probably recognises these and more complicated divisions as readily as does the other his familiar quavers and semiquavers. It is indeed difficult to judge the merits of any system which one does not use habitually.

Smaller sub-divisions than these are rarely met with in solfa, as there is only one time unit. In staff a minim is used as a beat in church music, a crotchet usually in the first and last movements of a sonata, and a quaver in a slow movement. Though the relative values of notes remain the same, this continual alteration of unit produces the utmost confusion. An amateur choral society always has trouble over reading music in which a minim is the standard. There is a Palestrina motet in Tovey's "Laudate Pueri" (Augener) which is exasperatingly troublesome to any amateur choir, merely because a semi-breve is the beat-unit. Teachers know how difficult it is for a young pupil to get the correct time of the slow movement of a Mozart or Beethoven sonata, where a quaver is the unit. No doubt the experienced musician likes to read his Byrd and much of his Brahms in minim beats, and slow movements in quaver beats, but that is again because he has always been accustomed to that method of writing. There is no merit in it *per se*.

The appearance of many slow movements is appalling; it is difficult to tell whether groups of short notes are three stroked, four stroked, or five stroked. Could anything be more terrifying in appearance than some of the variations in Beethoven's Op. 111? A recent book* on notational matters strongly urged a uniform beat in staff, and Elgar in a preface warmly supported the recommendation. But solfa adopted the principle years ago, and saved its adherents endless trouble and vexation.

Some writers object to the tonic solfa plan of considering d as the key note of the major scale and l as that of the minor. But it is in agreement with the historical development of modern art, and recognises the fact that out of the seven diatonic notes different groupings were used, clustered around various centres. The only difference is that whereas before 1600 the major scale was not the chief

* H. Elliot Button, "Musical Notation" (Novello).

grouping, it is now, and, consequently, it is taught first. If any difficulty is experienced in adopting *l* as a key note it is due to lack of skill in teaching, possibly through delaying the minor mode too long. To obtain the minor scale by flattening the third and sixth of the major is not only historically incorrect, but is a mere rule of thumb for spelling out the notes on a piano keyboard. It does not explain the various inflections of the minor scale. It creates unnecessary difficulties. *l, t, d r m f s e l* is much easier than *d r m a f s l a t d'*. The translation of almost any piece in a minor key into the conflicting plans will show that the solfa plan uses the minimum number of accidentals. (I use the word "accidentals" for want of a better; in reality *se* is not an accidental in the sense that *fe* or *ma* would be). In teaching elementary harmony we modulate to the relative minor at an earlier stage than we introduce the tonic minor. Except perhaps in the work of Schubert, who used certain characteristic formulae frequently, minor melodies change into the relative major more often than into the tonic major. One point in the teaching of the minor scale was a stroke of genius on the part of John Curwen. The sharpened sixth of the ascending melodic form, up to his time and until modern experiments in the formation of new scales, is nearly always used merely as a passing note between the fifth and seventh. Occasionally it may be taken as a changing note from the tonic, coming back to the seventh, or the tonic may be interposed between it and the seventh, but the effect on the mind is always the same, that of an unessential note. Only very rarely is it used as a part of the harmony. The mental effect is therefore vastly different from that of the sharp fourth of the major scale. As every detail of solfa is based upon mental effect, he christened the major sixth in a minor scale "*ba*," and reserved the name "*fe*" for the chromatic modification of the fourth of the major scale. The learner patterns *m ba se l* from the model *s l t d'*. There is no calculation of tone, tone, semitone, the mental picture is there. The tetrachord is thought of as a whole. *l se ba m* is learned similarly. A skilful teacher soon makes *l ba se* and *ba l se* familiar to his pupils, and nearly every progression of this sort is thus mastered in a few simple stages. The patterns are always ready to hand. As "*ba*" is pronounced "*bay*," it is entirely different from *ra*, *ma*, *la*, and *ta*, which are all pronounced with the "*aw*" vowel; no confusion can arise. Modal music is much in evidence now, both in the increased use of folksongs, and in modern composition. To adopt *d* as the keynote in all these cases is to get deeper and deeper into the mire. *r m f s l t d' r'* is simpler than *d r m a f s l ta d'*, *m f a l t d' r' m'* than *d r a m a f s l a ta d'*.

In almost every direction it is clear to an unprejudiced observer that tonic solfa has an advantage over staff. Take the question of the teaching of harmony. A student has to recognise a perfect cadence in twelve major keys, and in modulatory passages it may be sprinkled with many sharps, single and double, flats, or naturals. There are endless permutations and combinations. In solfa it is always a soh chord followed by a doh chord, save in a very few cases where a modulation is not indicated. And so it is with all progressions, diatonic and chromatic. A young staff student may harmonise a melody quite well if it is in C major or E minor, but B major or D minor will call up wicked spirits from the misty deep. To a solfaist all keys are alike.

Curwen and his followers were chiefly concerned with singing, as the best way of introducing music to the masses. Consequently the question of the suitability of his notation for instrumental music was a secondary consideration. But there are no intricacies of modern keyboard music which cannot be solved by its means, and a brief consideration of the most difficult problem which confronts a musician of to-day, that of score reading, will show its adaptability to other branches of art.

A modern orchestral score is sodden with awkward transpositions. The clarinet sounds a major second or a minor third lower, the bass clarinet a ninth, the cor anglais a perfect fifth; the horn, though generally a fifth, may sound anything. The trumpets sound a second lower or a second or fourth higher. Alto and tenor clefs abound. But in solfa scores there is no transposition except that bass instruments sound an octave lower than written, and the piccolo an octave higher. Clarinet, cor anglais, horn, trumpet, read as they sound, the key is merely indicated at the beginning. There are no conflicting clefs.

Again, once keys are familiar to an instrumentalist, a passage written in solfa can be changed into any key at will. Compare this with the mental processes necessary for transposition from the staff.

The musical profession held aloof from John Curwen. There was a tremendous demand for teachers of the method, and any fairly musical man could learn to read well enough in a few months to be able to impart rudimentary instruction to his fellows. The mission of solfa was mainly carried on by people of this stamp, who had not had time or opportunity to become cultured musicians. The result was that the level of music taught was generally appallingly poor, and the professional musician gathered his robes still more about him in virtuous indignation. Even now mud is slung at tonic solfa on account of the bad music it is supposed to foster, in convenient forgetfulness

of the character of the great mass of music issued in staff. Solfa has accordingly remained under suspicion to this day. The contempt of the staff-using conductor for his brother who "doesn't know music" (which means that he prefers to conduct from a solfa copy) is as profound as that of the British tar who sees a Russian shopkeeper reckoning on his frame of beads. A more legitimate source of scorn is the amateur, who, finding solfa an easy conquest, is too indolent to master the universal notation. In the early days of the movement many teachers aimed no further, and took no trouble to induce their pupils to secure the knowledge necessary to unlock the great treasury of musical literature. If the letter notation is pursued too exclusively in the early stages of instruction, staff seems so formidable that learning it threatens to be a serious task.

John Curwen was probably the greatest educationalist the world of music has seen. Not only is the system of writing which he devised extraordinarily simple and complete, but he had a marvellous instinct for analysing the processes of the mind which accompany musical activity, and for devising means of ensuring an easy passage across any difficult ground. When one reads his books one is astonished at his grasp of musical-psychological problems, and one finds nearly all the ideas passing current in modern musical-educational movements already thought out and mastered. This was one of the secrets of the solfaists. Every step could be taught easily and with certainty, every problem was solved, teachers not only learned to sing readily at sight, but were early imbued with the best principles of teaching. Even if a teacher never needs solfa, a course of instruction in the principles of the solfa method of instruction is an invaluable training.

Probably no one would recommend, at the present time, that solfa be studied throughout all its higher branches. Even its most enthusiastic advocates now regard it merely as a means to an end, that end being thorough musical development and ability to read quickly and with sureness from staff notation. However much we may admire the notation, we must agree that there is no possibility of its becoming universal in the future. The best method of teaching sight-singing (and that is not a department of education curtailed off from the others; every instrumentalist is the better for such a training) is to deal with both notations at the same time, introducing each fresh point first in solfa, and then applying it immediately to staff, all keys being used equally from the beginning. Experiment has convinced me that a class taught both notations reads better from staff in a given time than one nurtured exclusively on staff. It may seem to the uninitiated that time is wasted in teaching two systems when only one is needed. But reading from solfa is relatively

easy; young people are encouraged because they find themselves able to translate signs into sounds readily, and because they are able to get to grips with notation in a simple way. As they carry these principles into staff reading they do not find it so formidable. They have acquired the habit of singing from notation, and soon find that a little more perseverance enables them to get hold of the staff. After a certain stage solfa should be used merely as preparation for fresh staff difficulties, and as a means of acquiring fluency of musical thought.

No one who has had experience with choral societies doubts that, generally speaking, the singer with a good solfa foundation is a more accurate and rapid reader from staff than he who has only learned the standard notation. There are exceptions, naturally; we are not considering the specially-gifted, but the rank and file of choristers. A few pencilled solfa notes frequently clear away awkward stumbling-blocks which repeatedly throw the one-notation singer.

The present article is being written on a protracted Colonial examining tour. One finds that in districts where solfa is used in schools, ear-tests present relatively little difficulty. Where it is not, there is a great deal of guess work and much inaccuracy. If one sees a candidate anxiously watching the keyboard one has little hope of ready and correct answers. When solfa syllables are used, answers are prompt and in the main accurate. It is a common thing to find professional candidates who cannot distinguish between a major and a minor common chord, or between an interrupted and a perfect cadence. Music is conceived by them in terms of a keyboard, not as sound. Yet school-children with a good knowledge of solfa do these things readily.

If, instead of condemning their self-ignorance, musicians would give solfa a lengthy and unprejudiced trial, they would freely adopt its best points, and would acknowledge that they owe a great debt of gratitude to the remarkable insight and inventiveness of John Curwen.

(To be continued.)

JOHN TAVERNER'S MASSES*

THE Carnegie Trustees and their Editorial Committee are to be congratulated on the handsome volume before us, in which they have collected together all the Masses of Taverner (apart from a few fragments) which are known to exist at the present day. To these are prefixed a general Editorial Preface on the scope of the series of which the present volume is the first; a Historical Survey of the music of the Tudor period; an elaborate treatise on sixteenth-century musical notation, with special reference to English methods; a detailed description of the MSS. which form the basis of the musical text; and, lastly, a biographical summary of the events of Taverner's career, so far as these are known. Here the Editors have brought to light some facts not, we believe, previously known; and though these may give little pleasure or satisfaction to admirers of the composer, it would be foolish as well as useless to quarrel with facts. The end we do not know.

The Editors have not only collated all the MS. copies of these works which are known to exist, without overlooking any, so far as we are aware, but they have also carefully noted at the foot of each page all the variant readings; so that even if we may dissent in some cases from the Editors' conclusions, those who have not the opportunity of consulting the MSS. for themselves may exercise their ingenuity, if they so desire, in restoring corrupt passages. Needless to say, the intricacies of Taverner's notation—and they are many—have had no terrors for the Editors, nor have we come across a single instance in which these have been misinterpreted.

We wonder how many will realise the amount of labour that the preparation of this volume must have cost. When in the last century the works of Palestrina, Vittoria, and other Continental composers were reprinted, the problem was comparatively simple. In most cases the

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The article was intended for the July number, but owing to a mishap could not be ready in time. There is perhaps an advantage in the fact that this and the following article appear together as a tribute to a fine book.—[Ed.]

works of these composers were published in their lifetime, sometimes in many different editions, and, doubtless, under their supervision. Mistakes in the printed part-books are comparatively rare, and for the most part easily corrected. Bibliographical scholars, such as Robert Eitner and others, had prepared the way by cataloguing the principal European musical libraries. Given an adequate knowledge of the notation of the period, there remained little but the labour of scoring and the collation of different editions. In England the case was very different. Not only had we no Petrucci to print the works of fifteenth and early sixteenth century composers, but even up to the end of Henry VIII.'s reign no Church music was published in this country.* The earliest example of polyphonic music with Latin words is the "Cantiones Sacrae" of Tallis and Byrd, which appeared in 1575. For all our earlier composers, therefore, we are dependent on MSS. alone.

These MSS. are of two classes. The first consists of those few which have survived the great pillage under Henry VIII., and especially Edward VI., and which were actually used in Cathedral, Collegiate and Monastic Churches. Such are the great folio choir-books now preserved at Eton College, Lambeth Palace, and Caius College, Cambridge, and a few others, which date from the early sixteenth century or before that time. To these must be added a few single part-books, mostly incomplete and of rather later date, such as those at Cambridge University and St. John's College, or the Royal Appendix MSS. containing Ludford's three-part Masses at the British Museum. All these are very carefully written and corrected, and are of high authority, probably not less so than that of the early printed books of Petrucci. In the case of the Lambeth MS. indeed, which contains the earliest copies of Fayrfax's Masses, there is reason to believe that the book was actually transcribed by that composer. But it is doubtful whether these MSS. number a dozen, all told.

The second class consists of MSS. written for private use, mostly in Queen Elizabeth's time, and in many cases by unknown scribes of varying intelligence and ability. They are often very large collections, containing compositions by many different composers of various dates, and the degree of accuracy preserved may vary enormously, even in the same MS. As an example of this, British Museum Add. 17802—5 gives a text of Taverner's "Western Wynde" Mass (the first in this volume), which is in many places quite hopelessly corrupt; while the same MS. contains compositions by some later composers, such as Shepherd and Wm. Mundy, which are evidently transcribed

*A single Latin *Pater Noster*, by Cornysh, was included in Wynkin de Worde's secular Song Book of 1530.

at first hand with an accuracy which leaves little to be desired. (To avoid misapprehension, we will say at once that, in the case of the "Western Wynde," fortunately another MS. exists, which though of later date, gives an excellent text, as may be seen in the volume before us.) But the point we desire to emphasise is, that the material at the disposal of the Editors for the purpose of this volume is all contained in MSS. of this second class, in which must be included even such early examples as the Bodleian and Peterhouse MSS., the former of which certainly, and the latter probably, belongs to Henry VIII.'s time.

In order that our readers may understand the difficulties which the Editors have had to contend with, we will mention a few of the errors which occur more or less frequently in these MSS. Some of them are fairly obvious. The scribe writes a semibreve for a minim, or a breve for a semibreve, or *vice versa*. This might not in itself cause serious difficulty, but sometimes he counts his measures in the different parts, and finding that they do not correspond, he alters something else which possibly was quite correct; and thus in attempting to correct an error due to himself, or to some previous scribe, he produces a tangle which is often very difficult to unravel. Or again, he leaves out a single note or rest, or writes a redundant one. He mistakes his clef, and writes a few notes a third too high, or a third too low. He takes his eye off his copy, and his glance returns to the same note or series of notes a little farther on, with the result that a gap occurs in one of the parts, it may be of a few notes, or even one of considerable extent. In this case an editor must work from both ends, and by comparing the other parts, find out the exact limits of the hiatus. If no other MS. is available, he must then exercise his own skill and ingenuity in restoring the passage. Mistakes also occur as to accidentals, owing to the fact that these are not always placed in immediate proximity to the notes they affect, but (as in Plainchant) at the beginning of a group or ligature. In passing from one stave to another, these may easily get misapplied. But though the scribes all make mistakes such as these, fortunately they very seldom make the same ones; and consequently even two faulty MSS. may, when collated, produce a text which is at least free from serious errors. It also follows that an incomplete MS., or a single part, or even a fragment may be of quite indefinite importance for correcting a corrupt passage.

But to return from these general considerations to the volume before us, we find that of the eight Masses therein contained, no less than five are found in one MS. only, if we disregard a few short extracts,

which unfortunately do not affect the more difficult passages. Of these five, the Mass called "Small Devotion," is defective, wanting the tenor part; and this the Editors have very skilfully supplied conjecturally. Another Mass, "Mater Christi," also wants the tenor part; but this Mass is founded on a Motet which is complete in several MSS.; the Editors have therefore been able to supply a considerable portion of the missing part from the latter. The remainder they have, perhaps wisely, left unfinished for the present. "Corona Spinea," "O Michael," and the "Plainsong" Mass are each complete in one MS. Of the remaining three Masses, the "Western Wynde" occurs complete in two MSS. "Gloria tibi Trinitas" is complete in one MS., and in another wants the tenor part. For "Sine nomine" two MSS. are also available, one wanting the tenor, the other wanting the treble. Three of the voice parts are therefore duplicated.

It will be easily understood from what has been said, that the Editors could hardly have chosen a more difficult author than Taverner to begin upon, and that anything like a final or a critical text could hardly be expected under the circumstances.

We do not propose on the present occasion to attempt any critical appreciation of these works, more especially as the Editors have promised us an essay on the subject in their next volume; but we shall now proceed to examine a few of the more difficult and doubtful passages in the text before us; and, if in doing so, we have to dissent in some cases from the Editors' readings, we hope we shall not appear ungracious, since we have the same object in view as the Editors themselves—namely, the elucidation of the text.

Let us take first the conclusion of the Mass "Gloria tibi Trinitas," the last seven bars of page 156, the authorities for which are Bodleian MSS. e. 376—81, and Christ Church 979—83, the latter wanting the tenor part. This passage well illustrates what was said above as to the value of a second MS. in correcting a corrupt reading, and would, in fact, have been very difficult to restore from the Bodl. MS. alone. Without going into details, it will be sufficient to say that no less than four of the parts contain redundant values. Of these four parts, Ch. Ch. gives three correctly, only the bass containing redundant values. We were delighted to find that, as a result of a collation of the two MSS., the Editors had arrived at the same conclusion as ourselves—with one important exception, however. In the second bass (six bars from the end) the Editors have, unfortunately, adopted the Bodl. reading of a semibreve for the last B flat in the bass, with the result that we have a discord of a 7th and 9th unprepared and

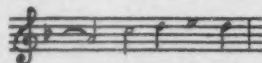
unresolved. Quite obviously the B flat should be a minim, as in the Ch. Ch. MS., and the passage should read thus :

Ex. 1.



The F following the B flat should evidently be an imperfect breve (value 4 minims) instead of a perfect one (worth 6 minims), notwithstanding that the scribe, with singular perversity, has written a figure 6 under it. As an example of the extreme delicacy of sixteenth century composition, we may see how one little minim misplaced is sufficient to spoil a singularly beautiful and faultless piece of counterpoint. We may add that, on the preceding page (4th bar of *Dona*), we should prefer the Ch. Ch. reading of the treble part :—

Ex. 2.



Let us now turn to the conclusion of the "Playn Song" Mass on page 49, and examine the last four bars. Here we find Taverner credited with a passage which, to put it mildly, is hardly worthy of "one of the world's greatest composers." We have first a pair of very crude fifths between 2nd tenor and 2nd bass; next an inadmissible 6-4 chord; and lastly, in the following bar, a discord in the bass without any resolution at all. We may also observe that the last inversion of a chord of the dominant 7th in the first bar, of which the Editors have themselves supplied the resolution, would have surprised us less if it had occurred about fifty years later. The Editors have recognised that there is something wrong here in the bass part, and have assumed that the scribe has written a rest instead of the semibreve E, which in itself is not very likely. It is much more probable that the preceding G should be a semibreve instead of a breve. This at once eliminates the fifths, the semibreve rest falls into its place, the 6-4 chord disappears (and so, alas! does the 6-4-2), as well as the discord in the bass. It is now only necessary to turn the semibreve A into a breve, and the passage reads thus :

Ex. 2



and there can be no reasonable doubt that this is what Taverner wrote.

On page 81, at *Domine Fili*, the Editors tell us that the MS. gives seven breve rests in the first tenor part. This is not correct. There are no rests whatever. The scribe has written in the words, and for some reason has neglected to add the notes, which, however, are quite easily supplied. The passage should probably read thus :

Ex. 3.



On page 86, bar 7, the bass should undoubtedly read :

Ex. 4.



On page 40, bar 14, the second tenor should probably read :

Ex. 5.



thus eliminating an unresolved 4th to the bass, and emphasising the imitation with the first bass.

Again, on page 44, bar 10, in the second tenor part, the unprepared 4th to the bass is clearly inadmissible. We suggest that the semi-

breve in the MS. is quite correct, and that the first breve **E** should be dotted, thus :



With the remaining corrections made by the Editors in this Mass we are in substantial agreement. Though only one MS. is available, and that far from faultless, yet the composition is of so simple a character that the mistakes are easily corrected, and the text which results cannot be far wrong.

For the "Western Wynde" Mass a singularly excellent MS. is available in Bodl. e. 1—5, as has been already mentioned. Only in one further passage that we can recall, we should have preferred the reading of Br. Mus. Add. 17802—5. We refer to the last note in the bass on page 18, where A would be better than F :



Harmonically this avoids the bare fifth, and melodically preserves the sequential rise of a third in the bass.



We may add that in the last bar of page 21 the Bodl. MS. gives B \sharp in the bass.

To come to more debatable ground, we think that throughout this Mass, the Editors' application of *Musica ficta* is open to question, particularly as regards the F \sharp at the cadence to the melody :



In an edition of this Mass, which the present writer prepared some years ago for the use of his own choir, he confesses that he added the sharp wherever possible, much as the Editors have done, on the ground that it was the invariable custom in Palestrina's time to sharpen the third of the dominant at the cadence in minor modes. Further consideration, however, has made him very doubtful whether

the rule is applicable here, or whether the cases are really parallel. In Palestrina the *Canto Fermo* (usually the tenor) almost invariably falls to the final: it is accompanied by a suspended fourth on the dominant; and is followed by a lengthy plagal cadence. Here, on the other hand, it will be noticed that in many cases the sharp is obviously impossible, even where dominant harmony is employed—as, for instance, at the end of the *Benedictus*, on page 22: at *terra*, p. 18, bar 10: p. 9, bar 7: *de caelis*, p. 11. In other places the composer avoids dominant harmony, as at *Sanctus*, p. 16: *tua*, p. 19: p. 20, first bar: at the end of p. 24: at *finis*, p. 14, and *Amen*, p. 15. It is clear from these passages that Taverner attached no special importance to a perfect cadence; and, if this view should find favour, it would appear that the Editors may safely indulge the predilection for the minor third which they acknowledge on p. xli. On the other hand, where the sharp has MS. authority and has also obvious harmonic or æsthetic significance, as when it occurs in the bass on p. 18, bar 2, or in the *Agnus Dei*, p. 28, bar 6, it should, of course, be preserved.

We should also dissent from the Editors' reading of a second F# in the treble part of the *Benedictus*, on p. 20, resulting, as it does, in the very harsh interval of a diminished octave. The first F# is undoubtedly authentic, but there seems no reason why the return to F# should not be made in the same octave, and at the same time a return to E# in the alto:



and the same applies to the opening of the *Gloria*, p. 3, bar 4.

We pass on to the Mass "*Sine nomine*," the authorities for which, it will be remembered, are two MSS. at Peterhouse, separately incomplete, which we will call A and B. On page 65, bar 8, we find three consecutive unisons between the second tenor and first bass parts, as given in MS. A. Fortunately, no exercise of ingenuity is required to correct these. We have only to adopt the reading of MS. B in the second tenor part. Our recollection is that the MS. is somewhat illegible at this point, and we have noted two possible readings:



Either will answer our purpose. The whole passage now reads thus:

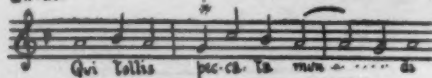
Ex. 9.



Owing to an oversight, to which we are all liable, the Editors do not appear to have collated MS. B at this point. But we are surprised that they should have passed the passage without comment, more especially as it occurs again at *dona nobis*, on page 69, bar 2, where they have printed it quite correctly.

In the Gloria of the same Mass, the Editors have altered the reading of the MSS. in the treble and second tenor parts at *Qui tollis* (page 53), for what reason we are unable to see.*

Ex. 10.



The retarded fifths are quite unobjectionable, and might have been written by Palestrina himself. On the other hand, at *suscipe deprecationem* the first bass should undoubtedly read :

Ex. 11.

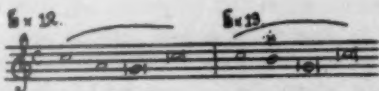


to match the treble two bars later.

The Mass "Corona spinea" (p. 157) is new to us. Though only one MS. is available, it appears to be a good one, and the text, so

*Since the above was written, we have ascertained that a duplicate Treble part exists at Peterhouse, which gives the reading adopted by the Editors. They have therefore altered the Tenor part only, to match the Treble. We should nevertheless reject this reading without hesitation.

far as we have examined it, looks very satisfactory. The case is different with regard to "O Michael," which is evidently very corrupt. Of the passage at the end of the Credo (p. 211) to which the Editors call attention, frankly we can make nothing. It is possible, of course, that the Mass is the work of a tyro, who, through indolence or lack of experience, left his work in an unfinished state. But it would be rash to assume that this is the case, since, if we remember rightly, Morley somewhere quotes the Mass as authoritative, implying that it was well known and admired in his day. The discovery of another MS. might put a different complexion on the matter altogether. But however this may be, there are many passages in the text before us which cannot possibly be correct—as, for instance, the fifth and sixth bars of page 196—to mention only one instance. It would be easy to suggest a very large number of plausible, and even probable, emendations. It appears to us, however, that the Editors' plan has been to print the MS. as it stands, with the minimum of alteration. We shall therefore content ourselves with noticing one passage—the opening of the "Sanctus," on page 212—where the Editors have attempted to correct the first tenor part. And in the first place, we may surely assume that the ligature C A G C, in the second bar, should read C B G C (Exs. 12 and 13).



Again, it is very unlikely that Taverner wrote the octaves between treble and second tenor which occur at the end of the bar. They could be corrected in several ways—for instance, the second tenor might read

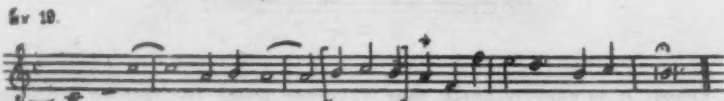


The fifths in the third bar between alto and first tenor, and between first and second tenor, are not objectionable, and appear to result from the natural flow of the counterpoint. In the fourth bar the Editors have added a dot to the breve C in the first tenor part, with

the result that we get an unresolved discord with the bass, and about four consecutive octaves with the treble! The fact is, that we have here a hiatus in the MS., which cannot be filled up by merely following the line of least resistance, and adding to the value of two of the notes, quite irrespectively of what the other parts are doing. The plan to be followed, as was pointed out above, is first to ascertain the exact limits of the gap by working from both ends. Adopting this method, we see at once that the C requires no dot, but the passage follows on quite correctly, as far as the dotted semibreve A. (Ex. 16).



Farther than this we cannot go, since the following crotchets make octaves with the alto. Now, working from the other end we get Ex. 17, which fits the other parts. There are now five minims wanting, of which the MS. only gives Ex. 18, which, as it stands, can hardly precede the minim E. The whole passage should probably read something like this: (For convenience, we will halve the Editors' bars.)



We cannot be sure, of course, that the notes we have added are exactly what Taverner wrote, but we are quite certain that the Editors' reading is wrong.

In dealing with sixteenth-century MSS. it is emphatically true that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The errors that we have pointed out (they are not very many) appear to us to be due to two causes. First, that the Editors have in some cases followed the MSS. too literally, and secondly, that they have not invariably borne in mind the principles which regulated sixteenth-century composition, especially as to the treatment of discords. With regard to

the first, it should be remembered that, while every reverence is due to the composer, there can be no object in perpetuating mere scribal errors, which form no part of the composer's thought, and for which he is in no way responsible. In the case of a passage which is hopelessly corrupt, it is no doubt the best course to call attention to the fact, and to print it as it stands. With regard to the second, the conditions under which alone discords (including the fourth to the base) were admitted are quite well known, and are in all essentials accurately laid down in the text-books of our youth, which it is now the fashion to despise. Nor does English practice differ in any material respect from that which prevailed on the Continent. Such passages as we have animadverted upon in connection with Examples 1 and 8 would have been looked upon in England, as elsewhere, merely as bad music. And so with regard to the time-honoured prohibition of consecutive perfect concords. Taverner was one of those musicians, of whom Morley tells us that they "never thought it greater sacrilege to spurn against the image of a Saint than to take two perfect cordes of one kind together." And even if there is but too much reason to believe that the composer was a backslider with regard to the first, it does not at all follow that he altered his practice with regard to the second. Such progressions, when they occur in the MSS., should always be carefully scrutinised. It is not to be denied that they may sometimes be due to an oversight on the part of the composer, and in this case it is no part of an editor's duty to "correct" his author. In the case of fifths again, they may sometimes have been condoned for purely contrapuntal reasons. But with regard to octaves, we may be quite sure that such passages as we have pointed out in connection with Examples 9 and 19 would have been considered quite unthinkable.

The art of music is at the present day obviously in a transitional and experimental stage, analogous to that of the early seventeenth century, if, indeed, any historical parallel can be found. In many quarters the wildest licence prevails, sometimes, it is to be feared, degenerating into mere charlatanism and humbug. The publication of this old music should prove a most valuable antidote, and help to recall men to a saner outlook. But it is of the utmost importance that it should appear, as far as possible, in a scrupulously accurate form. Otherwise it is likely to prove seriously misleading to all but a few.

We had intended to offer a few remarks on the peculiar (and, we think, inconvenient) system of barring adopted by the Editors, and especially to traverse their statement (Introduction pp. xxxiv. and xlv.) that, whereas modern time-signatures have an "accentual signi-

ficance," those of the sixteenth century have only an "arithmetical" one. We believe the truth to be that time-signatures had just as much, and just as little, accentual significance in the sixteenth century as in later times. This, however, is to a great extent a theoretical question, on which we could hardly enter without giving a large number of illustrations; and this article has already run to greater length than was intended.

When all is said and done, the volume before us remains a monument of industry and research—not faultless indeed, but of high promise for the future. It only remains to wish the Editors good luck with their undertaking, while giving them a friendly caution to exercise even greater care in the future than in the past in dealing with the many difficult and delicate problems presented by the MSS. *Magna est veritas, et praevalebit.*

H. B. COLLINS.

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SIXTEENTH CENTURY SERVICE MUSIC

(Continued from page 154, April, 1924.)

THE brilliant essay in the April number of *MUSIC AND LETTERS*, by Miss Townsend Warner, pointed out how the scribes of the sixteenth century MSS. take on a clothing of personality to their diligent students. Of the ideas which one gathers about the writer of a particular MS., however, the most important was not mentioned, namely, the suspicion that creeps over one from time to time that one is transcribing the work not of a copyist, but of a composer. The interesting discovery of the Editorial Committee of the Carnegie Trust Tudor Church Music Publications—who will allow me, I hope, to refer to them throughout this paper as “the Carnegie Editors,” for the sake of brevity—that two of John Taverner’s Masses were to be found in an English dress in the MSS. Bod. Mus. Sch. e 420-422, took me to Oxford for a second and more thorough examination of these MSS., which I had inspected superficially some ten years previously. In the course of some transcriptions this *flair*, that I was confronted by Taverner’s own work and handwriting, made itself felt, and a comparison with the letter in facsimile prefixed to the first volume of “*Tudor Church Music*” confirmed my suspicion that *the whole of these MSS. were in Taverner’s own autograph*. Dr. H. H. E. Craster, Sub-librarian of the Bodleian, has been good enough to make an independent examination, and writes: “I have little doubt that the whole of MS. Mus. Sch. e 420 . . . is in the same hand as the letter reproduced in *Tudor Church Music*, Vol. 1, plate facing page lv. There are differences, but they are not greater than is to be found between a formal set hand and an epistolary hand employed by the same writer.” *

The implications of this “fact (for such I think it is),” to quote Dr. Craster, are obvious to anyone acquainted with the controversy which raged not so long ago as to the effect of the “Reformation” on English Church Music; a controversy which resulted in the exposure of a series of false statements, but which did not succeed in entirely eradicating the effect of those false statements from the minds of many people who might be expected to know better. The best use

*Dr. Craster deals with this point in the October number of the “*Bodleian Quarterly Record*.”

we can make of this new piece of evidence is to place it at once in its true perspective, that we may be the less tempted to over-estimate its value in relation to the rest of the materials for the study of those few critical years preceding the official English Service Book of 1549.

To deal with the subject on a broader basis, there are three lines of enquiry to be pursued; first, as to the nature of the transitional music from 1538 onwards; second, as to the extent of the MSS. remaining; third, as to the proportion which the extant remains bear to the whole amount which may be computed to have once existed. We treat of the last of these first, for until it is agreed that the specimens referred to in this article are only representative of a larger corpus of what once existed, there may be a desire to decry their evidential value as being experimental only. Experimental they may have been, in the sense of feeling after a new and better style; but with the few exceptions, described later as "Cranmerian" specimens, they were not sterile. *Transitional* is therefore a far better name for this class of work than is *Experimental*.

To estimate the amount which must have perished, it is customary, and rightly so, to call attention to the wholesale destruction of MSS. at three epochs: (1) The spoliation of the monasteries under Henry VIII; (2) the flooding of the Church of England by the Genevan or Puritan elements in the later years of Elizabeth; (3) the Civil War and the triumph of the Independents in Cromwell's day. There were also intermediate bonfires at such dates as 1549—a very bad series—and perhaps in Queen Mary's reign. And there was the slow neglect which destroyed many Cathedral treasures in the Hanoverian period, borne out by the long list of anthems used in Charles II's chapel, of which the words alone survive in many cases.

Another line of factual enquiry is worth pursuing. When we call to mind that Palestrina composed 93 masses, over 200 motets, 45 hymns, 68 offertories, three books each of litanies, lamentations, and settings of Magnificat, besides secular music; that Vittoria is represented by more than twenty masses, a similar number of Magnificats, 40 hymns and psalms, four volumes of motets and 135 single motets beside; that of Obrecht there are extant 24 masses, 21 motets, 29 organ and secular works, and a Passion; while the exceptionally prolific Lassus is credited with the immense total of "51 masses, about 1,200 sacred motets and cantiones, 370 chansons, and over 230 madrigals"*

*Grove's Dictionary, Vol. ii., p. 647.

and more than 500 other compositions; it is a matter of fact rather than of speculation to record that the quantity of the work of the greater Tudor masters—even if it be admitted that the bulk of Byrd's output has been preserved—in our hands to-day represents only a fraction of their real achievements. Taverner, Fairfax, Shepherd, Tallis, Tye, Causton, Mundy, were the equals of their great Continental contemporaries, and there is not the least reason for supposing that their industry was any less. And what is true of them applies equally *mutatis mutandis* to the lesser-known men, Haselton, Johnson, Knight, Okeland, Packe, Parsley, Parsons the elder, Whitbroke, Heath, Merbecke, Stone.

We must therefore plead in advance to be absolved from any accusation of generalising from particulars if we seek to draw deductions from the material here presented.

Our leading musical writers have, rightly, concentrated their attention upon the productions of the best composers; rightly, that is, from the purely æsthetic point of view. But from the standpoint of MUSIC AND LETTERS we must include in our examination *all* the evidence available, not omitting compositions because they are experimental, unskilled, or (to us) tasteless. All readers could fit a name to more than one composer of anthems in our own generation whose work posterity will toss aside as poor and unskilful; but the *historians* of posterity will be wrong if they ignore it, for the "popular harvest anthem" is a valid piece of evidence as to the music which actually represents the taste which contents many of the rank and file of Church musicians and singers of this century, and still more so of the nineteenth. Many forms of science proceed by the study of abnormalities, history among them. The normal man has no history; it is the abnormal, super-normal and (too often) the subnormal man who provides history with her subject matter.

The material, then, with which this essay is concerned, even if it be not (as we think it is) typical, is still well worth examination, for two reasons. First, because it opens up research; second, because abnormalities are the product of original minds and of men in advance of their day. They are the rough material of progress.

The stages in the growth of the English tongue, until it came to be regarded as a sufficiently dignified language for liturgical use, are briefly, as follows:—

"In 1362 it was ordered that English should be used in the courts

of law. In 1368 the speech of the Chancellor in opening Parliament was in English: and the practice was thenceforth frequently repeated. In 1381 Archbishop Courtenay, the Chancellor, opened Parliament with an English sermon, and Archbishop Thoresby, of York, was active in promoting the use of the mother tongue in preaching and in office of devotion."* The approximate date of Wyclif's Bible is 1378. From the fourteenth century onwards Primers appeared in English; in 1494 one was printed by Wynkyn de Worde. By the middle of the fifteenth century English carols, English sacred songs, and an occasional translation of a sequence are to be found in increasing numbers, but there is nothing, so far as I am aware, of a strictly liturgical character so early as the troped vernacular Sanctus, in *Italian*, to be found set for three voices in motet-form, in the MS. Brit. Mus. Add. 29987.

In 1536 Cromwell, as Vicar-General, appointed the Paternoster and so forth to be taught in English, and in 1538 the Great Bible was ordered to be set up in the churches: in this year, also, the clergy were told not to vary the services on their own initiative. This prohibition implies, of course, that unauthorised alterations were already taking place, and that in some places these took the form of experiments in English is evidenced by a letter written by the famous composer Sampson, now Bishop of Chichester, on August 21, 1538, "to a dignitary at Rye expressing his aversion to any service sung openly in English, and advising the non-adoption of 'such novelties.'"[†]

"It was considered worthy of record that in 1538 the curates of Hadleigh, in Suffolk, and Stratford, in Essex, said 'the Mass and the consecration of the Sacrament of the Altar' in English several times, and that the 'Te Deum' was sung in English in London after sermons by Barnes and others."[‡] The aversion at headquarters to this feeling after English is shown by the fact that in 1543 Henry intended to *reform*, not end, the Latin service-books; but in the following year appeared the English Litany.

Two quotations of less value, but bearing on the subject, may be added here:—

1. Music in Henry VIII's reign was "applied in some parts of the service to the English instead of the Latin language."—(Burney, *History of Music*, Vol. iii., p. 2.)

*Poole, *Wycliffe and Movements for Reform*, p. 102.

† W. H. Grattan Flood in *The Musical Times*, April, 1920, p. 242.

‡ Wriothesley's Chronicle, quoted in R. W. Dixon, *History of the Church of England, 1529-1570*, vol. ii., p. 349.

2. "Towards the end of the second quarter of the sixteenth century . . . the use of Latin in public worship was being gradually discontinued and the English language substituted."—(J. M. Duncan, in *The Musical Times*, August, 1920, p. 551.)

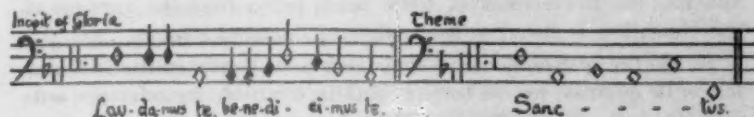
It is now time to return to the musical MSS., four in number, which throw light on this obscure period. Of three of these I do not propose to treat in detail, reserving space for the far more important Taverner English collection. British Museum Add. 5665 hails from Devonshire, and is noteworthy for its free intermingling of English and Latin texts. The most interesting item is a "Te Deum" by "Syr" Thomas Packe, in which an English translation, probably anterior to 1594, is mixed with snatches of the original tongue. It is set for three voices, with a five-part Latin chorus to each verse. B.M. Roy. App. 74-76 contains work of Tallis and other anonymous composers, the texts dating it as 1547 or 1548: three part-books alone survive.

B.M. Add. 34191, has received more attention than the others, but it is worth while to set out its contents in full, as this has not yet been done. It is an isolated Tenor book.

f. 1 Mass, *Spes nostra*. Robert Jones.

4 Mass, *Veni Sancte Spiritus* Richard Pygott.

12 Mass without name of theme or composer, on the following motif:—



for the use of English at this function, mentions explicitly that the Credo was sung on that occasion, we prefer the opinion of Mr. A. Hughes-Hughes, that the music of this, as of the other parts of the volume, is to be dated in the previous reign.

44 Asperges (Latin). Anonymous.

45 Magnificat (Regali). Doctor Fayrfax.

47b Gloria and Creed, in English, rather later than the other English service, says Mr. Hughes-Hughes.

By far the most important of the extant MSS. of this transitional period is the set of part-books alluded to in the opening paragraph of this essay, MSS. Mus. Sch. e 420-422, in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. The Tenor book is, unfortunately, missing, though if one part is lost the Tenor is the least indispensable, for the plainsong of, e.g., the English Litany, will complete the four-part setting. E 421 contains the Contratenor Primus, with a Medius part in addition for the five-part items; these two voices are, however, described in the last Mass in the volume (Taverner's adaptation of his "Small Devotion" Latin Mass) as Triplex and Medius, or, as we should say, Treble and Alto. E 420 is the Contratenor Secundus, E 422 the Bassus. The liturgical texts of this collection were exhaustively described, mainly from the point of view of Prayer-book History, by Dr. W. H. Frere, C.R. (now Bishop of Truro), in the "Journal of Theological Studies," for January, 1900, pp. 229 foll. The learned author there shows how the Apostles' Creed was used in some of the Mass settings, an English translation of the Nicene Creed being presumably not yet available, and how some of the translations of the Canticles at Morning and Evening Prayer obviously antedate the Prayer-book of 1549, being taken from the versions of the Henrician Primers, or from other unidentified sources.

To use the phrase of one of their assistants, music in the Bodleian has to be quarried for, as there is nothing available for reference outside the walls, except the up-to-date, but very large *Summary Catalogue of Western MSS.*, begun by Mr. Madan, and now being completed by Dr. Craster, the index to which is not yet in print. The admirable volumes of the *Catalogue of Manuscript Music in the British Museum* make the London MSS. easier of study and tabulation, while many of the treasures at Oxford are still generally unknown. This fact, coupled with the non-musical character of the quarterly, for which Dr. Frere wrote, has helped to keep students of this period in ignorance of the priceless contents of these part-books. Mr. Henry Davey, for instance, has ignored them, as well as the second MS. mentioned in paragraph IV. above. Indeed, had he been

acquainted with these two MSS. he would have been compelled in common honesty to revise his theories about the effects of the "Reformation" upon English music. The fact remains that he has missed these quite invaluable pieces of evidence, and the current fashion of quoting his "History of English Music" as a standard authority for the later mediæval period must now be abandoned.

The Carnegie Editors have told us, in the Historical Survey prefixed to their first volume, that the Bodleian MSS. contains, in addition to the two adaptations of Taverner's Masses to English words, Heath's* Communion Service, which was printed twelve years later in Day's "Certain Notes." This, of course, places Heath as a writer of "Cranmerian" or block-chord part-music earlier than Tallis.

The discovery that these MSS. are in Taverner's autograph throw further light on the date of his death, which was placed by the Carnegie Editors at between 1545 and 1558. The MSS. can be accurately dated by the relation which the liturgical texts bear to the First Prayer Book of Edward VI and the Primers of Henry VIII's reign. I am assured by an eminent New Testament scholar that *εὐδοκίας* in the beginning of the *Gloria in excelsis*, which the Reformers preferred to take from the Textus Receptus as *εὐδοκία* is undoubtedly to be held as the right reading. But the use of the translation, "Goodwill towards men," in the last two services in the MSS., instead of the earlier translation of the Missal text, "To men of good will," is almost conclusive proof that the MSS. were finished not earlier than 1548, which must then be taken as the earliest year for the death of Taverner.

John Taverner is another name to be added to the list—now a formidable one—of the later Henrician composers who, so far from abandoning the work of writing for the new English service in disgust, as we have sometimes been told, threw themselves into the task with zest, taking little or no notice of Cranmer's instructions. "Few there were that made"† the new beginning. Perhaps; but "few" is a relative term, and fewer still were they who did not make it. And now we find the Master of them all has not only made the new beginning

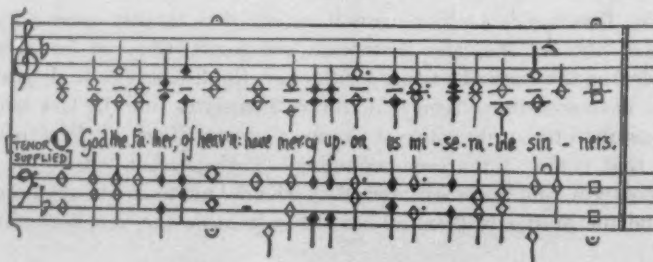
*Is there any justification for a suspicion I have sometimes entertained, that this Heath is the same as that Bishop of Worcester, who was associated with Cranmer and Day, Bishop of Chichester, in schemes for revision in 1545? Owing, perhaps, to the uninspiring character of his music in Day (though he was capable of more elaborate work), Dr. Grattan Flood has not included Heath in his interesting series of biographical notes in the *Musical Times*.

† Tudor Church Music, Vol. I., p. xxvi.

but added his imprimatur to the work of Shepherd, Johnson, Okeland, Knight, and even Heath and Stone. For on examination of these part-books in conjunction with the British Museum and other MSS. it will be possible to name many of the composers in the Bodleian MSS., in which none of the work is signed. Comparison with Day's Certain Notes and a few MS. cues of my own collecting, reveals at once the names of the following writers :—

Mundy, W.	O Lord, the Maker of all thing.*
Shepherd.	I give you a new commandment.
„	Submit yourselves one to another.
Tallis.	Hear the voice and prayer.
„	If ye love me, keep my commandments.
„	Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat.
Okeland.	Praise the Lord, O our souls.
„	Praise we the Father (Doxology to the Song of the three children).
Knight.	Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis (English).
Johnson.	O eternal God.

In addition to the Heath and Taverner work alluded to above, there are two settings of the Litany, the latter one being that usually associated with the name of Stone. The former setting is of great beauty and is worth reproducing in a "performing edition," as the tenor canto fermo is easily supplied. An extract is given here :



Articles in the *Musical Times* of August to October, 1920, and in March, 1922, claim that with the exception of "some fragments" in the Chapel Royal MS.—B.M. Roy. App. 74-76, referred to briefly

* Authorship not entirely certain: Mundy seems the most likely.

above—no harmonised setting of the English Litany appeared earlier than Day's Certain Notes twelve years later. Incidentally, these two articles are good examples of the way in which the false history of the Victorian era is continually being reproduced: one of them says that the composers, "after a few experiments, seem for the most part to have forsaken Anglican Church Music in despair." The recent date of this unfounded statement shows that this essay is not flogging a dead horse, or that at the very least, if the horse is dead, life is not yet certified as extinct. The truth is that the new school had been at work for some time before 1548, developing the tendencies that had been at work in the mind of the best Latin composers for some years past; and that their new beginning, in so far as it was either new or a beginning, was good progressive constructive work, and in no way revolutionary. Besides the composers mentioned in this article and in *MUSIC AND LETTERS* for April, 1924, pages 145 to 154, there are other Henricians who might be listed here, such as Smert, Truelove, Browne, Cornysh, Sheringham, Banaster and Davy, all of whom wrote for English words, and there is a host of anonymous compositions whose authors' names, if known, would extend this catalogue.

The further contents of the Bodleian part-books may be summarised briefly as follows: There are ten anonymous settings of the Mass,* following the order of the First Prayer-Book, but differing, as do all the liturgical texts in the MS. to some extent. The implications of these differences have been exhaustively worked out in Dr. W. H. Frere's article referred to above. Magnificat occurs four times, followed in three cases by Nunc Dimittis, while a fifth Magnificat, with its Nunc Dimittis, has been identified with the third (anonymous) setting of Day. Another anonymous item of Day's, namely, the anthem "Let all the congregation," a prayer for Elizabeth, is here a prayer for "Our Kyng Edward the Syxt." There are twenty-four other anthems, of which one is marked "for Wedyngs" and one "for ash wensday"; three settings of *Venite exultemus*, four of *Te Deum* (one of these being founded on the Ambrosian theme), four of *Benedictus*, one of *Benedicite*; the Introit for Whitsunday—a translation from the Missal, complete with *Gloria Patri*; four offertories and seven post-communions, the offertories and most of the post-communions agreeing with the scheme of the First Prayer-Book; a *Deus Misereatur*, an arrangement of the Burial Anthems,

* I use the term "Mass" in speaking of the Order of the Holy Communion in the first Prayer-Book of Edward VI for brevity, and because it is the alternative title given in that document.

and three settings of the Easter Anthems. Finally, on the last leaf is added, presumably at or after 1552, music for the Responses after the Ten Commandments.

The ten English settings of the Mass may be classified as follows in the order of elaboration:—

1. The two adaptations by Taverner of his own Latin Masses, which must be studied by the reader in the third volume of *Tudor Church Music*; with two florid services of the Henrician type, which may, of course, be adaptations from the Latin, but they have this essential difference from the Latin Masses of Henry VIII's reign, that both have a *Kyrie eleison*. In the adaptations by Taverner no *Kyrie* has been added, which suggests that these two anonymous services were written to English words for the first time. Indeed, the old idea of claiming everything good in Edwardine or Elizabethan music as an adaptation from the Latin is without proof and must now be abandoned.

2. Four Masses of the new school of moderately syllabic, but quite complex, composition, represented by the work of Shepherd, Causton, &c., a specimen of which was given in the April number of *MUSIC AND LETTERS*.

3. Heath's, and one unidentified, of the "Cranmerian" type, so unfortunately perpetuated by Tallis' "Dorian" service. These two, with the fourth Mass (florid) and the seventh (slightly contrapuntal), are dated by their texts as earlier than the remaining six.*

It is the second of these three types which is distinctive of three-quarters of the contents of these part-books, and it is to this type rather than to the first or the third that we must look for the true English school of the period. It is good artistic and scientific music, adapting itself to the special requirements of the English tongue. It corrects the weaker tendencies of the Henrician Latin music, at least in its liturgical aspects; there is no slavish fashion of the unsatisfactory Latin traditions of word-underlaying, and no foolish adherence to the nonsensical requirements of Cranmer. Indeed, a special notation of black *longa* and *duplex longa* (the *strene note* of Merbecke) seems to have been used for the Cranmerian experiments. This second type is that which the great masters who followed Taverner chose instinctively for their best work, the type which has lived all through the English Cathedral tradition, the type which has contributed more than any other to make English Cathedral music renowned throughout the civilised world.

* J. T. S., vol. 1, p. 235.

As for the Cranmerian music, only three names can be associated with it, and the list of compositions is meagre indeed :—

Merbecke's Boke.

Heath's Communion Service, and Te Deum to Merbecke's *canto fermo*.

Tallis' Dorian Service.

Anonymous.—The fifth Mass in the Bodleian part-books.

One setting of the Easter Anthems, and a Nunc Dimittis in the same.

Some in B.M. Add 34191 and Roy. App. 74-76.

It is noticeable that practically the whole of the music is written with the time signature C the only exception being the necessary employment of f in some sections of Taverner's adaptations and in the second (florid) Mass.

It is a matter of profound regret that this supremely important set of part-books has, until this year, only been dealt with in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, a magazine which we can hardly expect historians of a certain type to peruse regularly.

Adequately to deal with the new Shepherd-Tye-Causton school requires an amount of research which is beyond the opportunity of a single magazine writer, though it is a line which we hope the Carnegie Editors will, we hope, include in their future activities. The material is by no means small or fragmentary, when it is diligently swept up. A rough computation from the catalogues of the British Museum, Christ Church, Oxford, and the Royal College of Music alone reveals the following number of items from four representative composers of the Edwardine and early Elizabethan period, which we might almost term the " bilingual " era :—

Johnson.—11 Latin motets, 5 English anthems, 1 Service.

Mundy (W.).—27 Latin motets, 24 English anthems, 2 Services, 2 or 3 Magnificats in Latin, with 2 Masses, English Te Deum.

Parsons.—10 Latin Motets, 10 English anthems, 2 or 3 Services.

Shepherd.—53 Latin motets, 13 English anthems, 48 English hymns, 2 or 3 Latin Magnificats, 4 Masses, 2 Services, and portions of 2 or 3 others.

And beyond all the material which can be collected under the composers' names, there is a large quantity of unidentified music in such MSS. as those mentioned, besides a certain amount of Edwardine music of about 1551 in Bod. Mus. Sch. e 428, a contra-tenor part

alone. The amount of labour involved in identifying these is considerable, when it implies, for instance, a part at Oxford, one at Wimborne, one at Durham, one in London, and a fifth missing. Incipits have to be scored or photographed, forwarded to some central bureau, and collated with others before the work of editing for publication can be even begun. The more one examines at first hand the work of the Tudor Church Music editors, the more one realises the magnitude of the task they have undertaken, and the importance of sixteenth-century Church music from the artistic as well as from the historical standpoint.

ANSELM HUGHES, O.S.B.

ABOUT "PIERROT LUNAIRE"

The Impressions made on various audiences by a Novel Work

ONE of the difficulties—attractions, perhaps—of a virtuoso's life is the perpetual change of audience. Each difference of hall or town or latitude obliges him to acclimatise himself physically and morally. Vocal cords and violin strings are alike affected in a dozen different ways by a change of climate; and then again, just as the player, at each town he come to, must take the local A, so before the actual day he has to get the A of the audience. If yesterday he roused an industrial centre to enthusiasm, his reception to-morrow in some town whose business is administration or diplomacy may be something quite different. Only an artist who has made a long tour, in a country that is new to him, knows these perpetual fears and this never-ceasing nervous strain. And, after all, without them, his life would be too easy and quite dull.

There is less risk, of course, when the musician plays things he knows quite well, and has chosen for the express purpose of getting the maximum effect out of the minimum of effort. But if it falls to his lot to have to champion a new work, so new as to give a rude shock to the tastes and traditions of the great majority of his hearers, his courage will be severely tested, and he will need a cool head and nerves of steel. So true is this, that most artists do not take the risk; they play, beyond the privacy of their study, only such works as they are perfectly sure of themselves over. Hence most of their concerts—and here I shall carry with me the unfortunate members of the musical Press—are flat and unprofitable.

Fate decided that I should be called upon to take part, during the last two years, in one of those contemporary works which have raised controversy, even storms, all through Europe: Arnold Schönberg's "Pierrot Lunaire," the amazing thing that was played three times last November in London Music Clubs, after various performances by the same artists in Paris. To come in contact with these various audiences was to receive very vivid impressions; and lately it has been my good fortune to round off these impressions by certain others obtained during a tour in Italy under the direction of the composer. Opportunities of observing the audience were greater there, since we went

all through the country, from Naples, through Rome, Florence, Venice, Padua and Milan, to Turin.

I am able to take a detached view of it all. I need not reel off the list of our successes, for it would be an exaggeration to pretend that these evenings were a series of triumphs in any ordinary sense; indeed, during these performances the mercury wavered between "rain" and "stormy." When we were applauded it was with some diffidence, and when we were hissed there was always an emphatic opposition camp. Press and public alike could indulge the most diverse opinions; the only thing that no one thought of "Pierrot Lunaire" was that it was insignificant. But, before speaking of what the listeners made of it, I should like to say what the interpreters thought of it.

To make a critical analysis of this intricate work is not my object, nor would it lie within my power; besides, it would be waste of time. "Pierrot Lunaire" which opened the floodgates of invective, as between those who admire or dislike Schönberg, has also caused torrents of ink to flow. I advise the reader who is not familiar with the work to study the pocket-score and read the various daily papers and periodicals. They fill a fat quarto. I will say quite simply what effect it produced on us at the first rehearsals.

One of the commonplaces that one always hears at the end of the performance of a work of this kind is—"You can play what notes you please and it would sound just as well." That is a complete mistake.

At the first rehearsals there will obviously be a goodly crop of wrong notes, and neither conductor nor players will notice them at first. They agree mutually to keep to the main lines and not stop over details. But for practised musicians two facts at once emerge—

1. Technical problems are soluble or insoluble.
2. The thing sounds, or doesn't.

It had been my business to collect this little band of instrumentalists, and my first care had been to choose only sound technicians. That is not the usual course; what those who are in the van of progress look for is youth and enthusiasm and a passionate love of adventure. But to my mind enthusiasm and devotion are here of small account as compared with practised fingers and eyes, and so the music with which my colleagues were familiar belonged certainly to the day before yesterday rather than to the day after to-morrow. How was it that from the very first rehearsal they took the thing seriously? In the first place because, choke-full as it was of awkward passages and technical difficulties, the work contained none of those clumsi-

nesses at which the players shrug their shoulders and which send the work back for revision. And secondly, because from the very first reading we felt that the author's conception and realisation of his thought was clear and deliberate, and that the effect produced was the effect intended. There are, and there always will be, secret affinities between the expert of the instrument and the expert of the pen; whether the composer's thought is commonplace or extravagant, he will always have the respect of his interpreters if he can prove to them that he understands his business.

That Schönberg understands music and has learned it in a good school there can be no sort of doubt. He has been called a romantic, obviously because he has been an ultra-romantic in the way he has handled "Pierrot Lunaire," that bitter parody of the romantic school. But actually he derives from the classics: classical, almost scholastic, in his taste for contrapuntal episodes and for the musical puns which are sown broadcast in his work, especially in No. 18, the baffling "Mondnacht." These contrapuntal subtleties, drowned in the apparent chaos of an aggressive polyphony, may escape the hearer of a single evening, but they cannot escape conscientious interpreters who willingly undertake a series of rehearsals. The moment they see there is a logic behind these deeds of daring they will not be niggardly with their efforts. Perhaps it is only the comfortable feeling of having conquered difficulties, but at any rate the fact remains that Schönberg has won devoted interpreters who, even if they are opposed to his system, are determined that his work shall be a success.

And now as to its "sounding"; I have won various impressions. People have often said that this combination of instruments was ugly; they have never said that it sounded hollow. There is no question that Schönberg's thought has been realised in performance. The majority of his hearers may have regarded this little orchestra of five as an instrument of torture, but they may be sure at any rate that the instrument is solidly constructed and that there is in it not a wheel too many or too few. It would be difficult to write with more slender means: a flute alternating with piccolo, a clarinet with bass clarinet, a violin with viola, a 'cello and a piano. And they are seldom used all together; sometimes there are four of them, three, two, or even only one. With these restricted resources the author manages to give, when required, the effect of a whole orchestra. I felt that vividly every time we reached "Les Croix." However hostile the audience, in the midst even of laughter or lively demonstrations, the end of this piece was always received with the respect of

silence: its evident strength always quells the rioters. Asceticism like this has its dangers; with an orchestra composed of the bare essentials you cannot afford mistakes or omissions. With all respect to the "you-can-play-what-notes-you-please" contingent, anyone who knows the work can detect a wrong note or a missing part as easily as in a Haydn quartet. I realised that one day at a rehearsal of another extremist work. We were going through for the first time Darius Milhaud's symphony for ten wind instruments. By one of those fatalities which are for composers and orchestral leaders the bane of existence the *cor anglais* was late, so late that we had to begin without him. This work of Milhaud is one which is peppered over more liberally than usual with daring harmonies and rough tone-qualities, and I confess with humility that at a first hearing the second movement appeared to me to be mere cacophony—a purview which I subsequently abandoned; moreover—a thing which performers think more of—the orchestration sounded poor and hollow. I was beginning to wonder whether we should ever get anything out of it, when our *cor anglais* arrived, puffing and panting. If the work had really been cacophonous his contribution would only have made the muddle worse. But, on the contrary, it cleared the whole thing up wonderfully, and I was astonished to find that it sounded excellently, even if that was its only merit.

If I apply the word "excellently" to "Pierrot Lunaire," no doubt I shall shock more than a few of our audience. We will say, then, that it sounds as it ought to sound, and pass on now to the reception it had.

Performed for the first time in Germany, in 1912, "Pierrot Lunaire" did not reach Paris till 1922. Meantime there had been the war and the ban on modern German music, and, still worse, there were the material difficulties—the expense, and the enormous number of rehearsals—which no one quite saw how to get over. At this point, and at his own risks, there stepped in M. Jean Wiener, a young musician, a clever pianist and a bold organiser. He has a natural turn for the daring conceptions and outrageous fancies of modernism, and is more at his ease in Schönberg and Stravinsky than many amateurs are in Clementi. Besides, his weakness for jazz* and his skilful playing of his own transcriptions of the American "Blues" give him a special position in the musical world. His well attended concerts draw a peculiar public, rather cosmopolitan, ready for any eccentricities and greedy for new sensations. It was his own

*The influence of the jazz-band on Stravinsky and his followers explains much that would otherwise be unintelligible.

quaint idea to combine in a single programme of chamber-music an item for jazz-band (excellent, by the by), the *Sacre du Printemps* on the piano-player and Milhaud's sonata for wind instruments. The fact that this outrageous assortment had called forth no protests led one to suppose that "Pierrot Lunaire" would be received by the same public with acclamation.

That the art of Schönberg has little appeal to the disciples of Stravinsky was clear from this first experiment, which excited lively curiosity but ended in tumult. In a hall without an empty seat in it and an atmosphere charged with electricity, we played, under the direction of Darius Milhaud, the first part only of this work. Madame Marya Freund took the vocal part. The very first bars of this sung speech (or spoken song—whichever we are to call it) took everyone by surprise, and the weird harmonies did the rest; and there we were in the middle of a Homeric battle.

The Parisian public remains calm, as a rule, so long as it is presented with nothing abnormal; but the moment it is given a novelty with a challenge in it, the old combative instincts of the race are aroused. In the first place there is always a fraction of the audience which regards music, rightly or wrongly—for there is something, after all, to be said for the view—as an after-dinner distraction, a digestive. This opinion prevails in the higher ranks of society. Then, the Frenchman, a chatterbox by nature, dislikes keeping his opinions to himself; as soon as he is bored he lets his neighbours know. I noticed the other evening, during the performance of a similar work, a gentleman of some social position fidgeting under it a good deal. He was sitting in a comfortable chair close to the door; and he could either have gone to sleep at peace with all men, or three steps would have taken him to the restaurant in the passage outside. But he preferred to punctuate the performance with yawns and witty ejaculations, and to prevent his neighbours appreciating the music they came to hear. This displeased them, of course, and they protested. Such electioneering manners have always been fashionable in society gatherings at Paris, and the occupants of the Jockey Club box, who put an end to the representations of *Tannhäuser* at the Opera under the Empire, have left a numerous progeny. But it is not only smart society that does not get on with Schönberg.

In France we have as many schools of music as we have parties in politics, which is saying more than a little; and the suave amenities of debate which prevail in the Chamber of Deputies are reproduced in musical gatherings as soon as the concert leaves the beaten track. There is the group of "La Nationale" (d'Indystes-Francistes), the

S.M.I. (Fauréens-Debussyistes), the "Six" (in whose lute a little rift is visible), the Prix de Rome, the Satistes, etc., etc. Convinced, hot-headed and pugnacious, they are all of them in the room and ripe for a fight the moment opportunity offers. Here the opportunity was too good to be missed, and the second hearing (complete, this time) of "Pierrot Lunaire" brought together one of the most representative audiences that Paris has seen for a long time. I hope Messieurs Ravel and Florent-Schmitt will not mind my revealing the fact that they were among the warmest of Schönberg's admirers; but they were hard put to it to defend their opinion with musicians of their own mettle. Each number, lasting from two to four minutes, was greeted with cheers and hisses. When the hisses had it, Milhaud began again and finished in a regular uproar. I saw one man in the third row of the stalls livid with rage when an encore was announced: he stamped violently, shouting out: "No, no! Not again! Not again!"

There is one very good point about this collaboration of the audience. If he takes hisses, insulting remarks and encores into consideration, the concert-giver can count on his programme being prolonged beyond the moment where it becomes necessary to tack on another piece. A performance so full of incident easily fills a whole evening, and never has so short a programme finished so late.

I will add that the Press, high and low, was favourable to the work, and that critics, even when they did not like it, showed no animosity to the composer.

Never have the divergent characteristics of the two friendly and allied nations shone out to me more clearly than last November, when "Pierrot Lunaire" was given in London. Our three performances, at the Kensington Music Club, the Music Society, and the Chelsea Music Club, exactly reproduced those at Paris. There were the same players and the same conductor; even the text, which it would have been child's play to Madame Marya Freund to sing in the original, was given in the French translation, though some of the critics found fault with this arrangement. We had, therefore, every right to expect the same "incidents," and I felt a little anxious about our reception.

We began at Kensington. "Pierrot Lunaire" at Kensington has always seemed to me an amazing paradox. I am fond of Kensington from having lived there often. Except for the bustle of High Street at the shopping hour there is an air of quiet and respectability that reminds me of Oxford. Moreover, Leighton House is not far off, and

the Palace where so many of the Royal family lived is close by. And there is a faint fragrance of the Victorian era about it. No part of London is less morbid or more restful. If in summer I walk through its green, deserted ways, and hear the sound of a piano, it will probably be a fugue of Bach. My old friends there all belong to the Bach Choir, and a photograph of Joachim is in every music-room in the parish.

That the members of the Kensington Club should have consented to hear this diabolical music, is a magnificent proof of their eclectic philosophy. But that they should have listened with such patience and fortitude is no less magnificent an instance of that sense of fair play which is one of the most endearing characteristics of Britons.

What an impressive calm! How unexpected this inward peace after our stormy meetings at Paris! At the most daring places in the score I watched the audience out of the corner of my eye. They never blanched. They sat there, calm as a boxer who takes punishment with a smile. I thought of the bright moonlight nights of 1918 and the Zeppelins. Whatever the aliens of Soho and Whitechapel might think fit to do, for the inhabitants of Kensington and Belgravia good taste demanded that, whatever they might feel, the hand of bridge should be played quietly to an end. In 1923, as in 1918, my British friends gave me an admirable illustration of self-control, and I wondered whether the "moonstruck Pierrot" was not even more distasteful to them than the moonlight raids of the German airmen.

After getting ourselves listened to at Kensington Town Hall, we felt sure we should in that curious little hall in Tufton Street, the ideal setting for a thing of this kind. The dimly lighted crypt, made dimmer still by the blue spirals of cigarette smoke and by the all-pervading Thames fog, exactly suits the morbid subtleties and sudden clashes of Schönberg's score; and the cultivated audience lying back in their deck-chairs, of whom we were only vaguely aware, seemed to take pleasure of a kind in our concert. It was the same with the Chelsea audience. If there is one quarter of London rather than another in which one dare risk a bold gesture, it is this ant-heap of artists and literary men, always ready to see the fun in an interesting novelty. On the whole, then, our reception was good everywhere. It may have been the presence of several professional musicians, who put themselves in our place and, realising the number of our rehearsals, clapped our efforts like good sportsmen. What touched me most was not so much the sympathy of those who liked the work as the courtesy and patience of those who in their hearts wished us to the devil. That was most impressive, and I cannot properly express my admiration of it.

I may add that, in contrast with what happened on the Continent, we had a frightfully bad Press. Well, well; it is the duty of a critic to say what he thinks, without mincing matters, and nobody need take umbrage at it.

I thought I had finished my experiences with "Pierrot Lunaire," when a proposal came from the distinguished Italian composer, Alfred Casella, which sent me to school again. We were to give the work in Italy under the composer's direction. Who could resist a tour in Italy and the prospect of giving such glorious battle? I set out with enthusiasm, and my unceasing thirst for novelty was soon quenched, for I saw Naples without sun and played "Pierrot Lunaire" in its original form.

I ought to say here that the "Pierrot Lunaire" which London heard was not exactly as the author conceived it. In the first place, the French translation makes an appreciable difference in its general swing and go; and in the second, Madame Marya Freund, excellent singer that she is, cannot quite forget that she is a singer, and sings consequently with a reciter's inflexions, whereas Schönberg intended it to be recited with musical inflexions. And I should add that this most conscientious artist has submitted her interpretation to Schönberg himself, and he was delighted and surprised, and greatly admired her art in this new version.

In Italy the vocal part was assigned to the handsome and intelligent Erika Wagner, a star of the Viennese *Schauspielhaus*. She is equally remarkable as a dramatic artist and as a concert singer. The piano was in the hands of Mr. Steurmann, an interpreter of Schönberg's own choice, and the strings were supplied by the Brussels quartet, *Pro Arte*.

Of course it was Schönberg's own personality that I most wished to become acquainted with, and I was not disappointed. In that small, active man, always in motion, with a piercing and roving eye and mobile lips, simple in dress and in manner, and without a semblance of pose, there is nothing that suggests the hunter after sensational success or the upstart pining for advertisement. If his name has made a stir it is certainly in spite of himself. All that I had heard of him, of his solitariness and inaccessibility, of his life far from distractions and wrapped up in his work, was fully confirmed by such relations as I had with him. One thing may be confidently asserted, and that is his absolute sincerity. By what paths and in the train of what circumstances this technically learned musician, brought up in the strict classical method, reached his present point of view, I

cannot say. Abnormal brain-power, perhaps, wearying itself incessantly to find combinations of sounds ever stranger and more complex; but at any rate no mere itch for notoriety or striving after effect. Neither is he an iconoclast. In the course of this Italian tour, one rainy Sunday, we made a little music together—Bach, Mozart and Haydn. It gave him the greatest pleasure, and he confessed to us that quartet-playing—he plays the viola—is his Sunday amusement at Moendling. The excitement he threw into our visits to the treasures of art in which Italy abounds, was evidence of his open mind and catholic taste.

He is no great conductor, no virtuoso of the bâton, but his leading is exact and autocratic, he knows what he wants and how to get it. It is true to say that at the last rehearsal we were conscious of having got ready as faithful a performance as is possible with so exacting a work, and I felt a weight off my mind.

For indeed I had started for Italy feeling sure that we should never get through an evening; and from what I knew of the irascible Latin public I was afraid we should be pelted with tomatoes and oranges. Perhaps it was in consequence of the high standard of life, but at any rate we were spared this supreme humiliation. Not only did we escape from the adventure safe and sound, but we were able to play the work to an end every time, which was more than we ever hoped; though between that and any assertion that we were garlanded with floral tributes there is a certain unfilled blank.

Everything combined to make this venture a difficult one. Italy is the land of *bel canto*, and the measured and inflected diction which the composer had imagined has, in itself, nothing in common with singing. The German language is unintelligible to almost all Italians, and the rough gutturals, being meaningless, sounded to them funny. Our audiences almost everywhere contained girls ready to giggle at the smallest incident or the mildest orchestral surprise; and in every town there was a small body of young musicians, chiefly students in the full swing of their classical studies, who were quite determined not to allow a note of this infernal music to be played. Well, as I said, we were listened to everywhere till the very end. At Rome, actually, a concert under the auspices of the *Corporazione per la nuova musica* was a real success. But elsewhere we made heavy weather with our performances. The sense of fun—of course, in the best possible spirit—took complete possession of this easily swayed public, and found vent in laughter, witticisms and discussion. Happily, Erika Wagner is very handsome—a matter of no small importance in the land of the Beautiful—and Schönberg, in spite of his small stature, has a presence; so people had to listen willy nilly.

One of the most interesting episodes of our tour was the meeting of Puccini and Schönberg at a concert at Florence. The illustrious composer of *Tosca* and *La Bohème* had done the three hours by rail from Lucca for the express purpose of hearing music so different from his own. If anybody had an excuse for going out and slamming the door behind him, it was he. But no; he set a good example of patience and self-command to many a hot-headed youngster. He listened right through with the greatest attention and interest, and congratulated the author afterwards in the artists' room, where he discussed technical details with him. Perhaps we shall have—who knows?—some little Schönbergian reminiscence in his next opera. Nobody would be more surprised than Schönberg.

And now I wonder under what sky we shall next play "Pierrot Lunaire," and what reception a new country will give us. Will it be French frenzy or British reticence or Italian merriment? All I can wish for is what the Gallic soldier asked of the Roman captain who was going to condemn him unheard:—"Strike, but listen!"

L. FLEURY.

[Trans., A. H. F. S.]

CHARLES KOECHLIN'S INSTRUMENTAL WORKS

By M. D. CALVOCORESSI

I SHOULD have liked to refer in this article to the whole of Koechlin's instrumental music, of which little is known in France, and practically nothing elsewhere. Unfortunately, no orchestral works of his are published, and, writing from memory only, I could not trust myself to do justice to the few which I have heard performed.

The aspects of his individuality are many. No doubt that his big tone-poems or orchestral suites, *les Saisons*, *Etudes Antiques*, *La Forêt*, *Heures Persanes*, and his choral works reveal much that is not to be discovered in the piano and chamber works available for study. His *Chant Funèbre à la Mémoire des Jeunes Femmes Défuntes*, and the first (the only published) part of his *L'Abbaye* are enough to show that his choral output is worthy of careful study. But, although a survey in which all the above-named and the many unpublished examples of his chamber-music (including several sonatas for piano and a wind-instrument) are not dealt with is bound to remain in many respects inadequate, the published instrumental works bear enough testimony to his genuine sensitiveness and imaginativeness, to his versatility, originality, and power. They show us, firstly, that he commands the greatest and most uncommon of gifts—the gift of plenteous melodic invention. His melody is easy in its flow, eloquent and orderly enough to be acknowledged as melody even by those whose notion of melody is the least elastic. And it is in all respects so distinctive, that even a slight degree of acquaintanceship with his music will enable us to acknowledge the authorship of any work of his on the strength of the melodic style alone. Whether we study his lovely piano pieces for children, or the fine sonatinas, or the big sonatas for piano and other instruments, this feature will be the first to strike us.

Particularly typical of Koechlin are long, supple melodic themes, whether evenly sustained and of unadorned smoothness, such as this one from the first movement of the violin sonata :

Ex. 1.

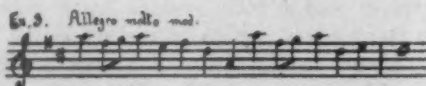


or consisting of arabesques in perfectly proportioned, though seldom symmetrical balance, as in the opening of the *Chant du Chevrier* (*Paysages et Marines*)



it will be felt that melodies of this kind possess a power of expansion that is practically boundless. Certain pieces of Koechlin's are one long flow of melody unfurling itself without a trace of artifice or effort. Another particularly fine instance is the *Poème Virgilien* in the (*Paysages et Marines*):

Even in his "abstract" music, Koechlin often contents himself with this simple course of procedure. Elsewhere, we find him availing himself with great ingenuity of the plastic properties of his themes. These long smooth melodies, and melodies of another type—terse, frank and definite in rhythm—which occur as frequently in his works—e.g., this from the finale of the violin sonata:



are equally plastic in his hands.

However elaborate his working out may be (instances occur even in short pieces, such as *Soir d'Été*, in *Paysages et Marines*), he always abides by the natural properties of his themes, to bring out and exploit which is his sole object. Nothing he does is done for the sake of mere form or display. This is why his music remains simple in effect, even when the analyst might be tempted to describe it as intricate.

The chief characteristic of his music is that it conveys a feeling of open air and spaciousness. It is difficult to explain why. There can be no question of definite associations, of any actual tendency of

CHARLES KOECHLIN'S INSTRUMENTAL WORKS 359

his to so-called impressionistic transpositions. Sometimes the feeling is due to the quality of the harmony, implied or underlying, as in Example 8 below; sometimes to a melodic inflexion, as in the following example, which occurs in the second line of his violin sonata:



A consequence is that his poetic music and his abstract music closely resemble one another. It is wiser to register the fact without even asking whether or not his musical idiom is primarily poetic or descriptive in origin or purpose (I use this non-committal, double-barrelled wording because my own views on the rationale or "descriptive" music are sometimes considered peculiar. It is easy enough to proceed from certain things in his poetic pieces to similar things in his sonatas, as Schweitzer and Pirro proceed from Bach's cantatas to his instrumental works. On the other hand, if we are unacquainted with his *Paysages et Marines*, we may see no reason for ascribing a definite poetic or descriptive origin to the very things in his sonatas whose poetic suggestiveness will strike us most.

This, moreover, is but one particular instance of the affinities existing between his various works, all of which are, so to speak, chapters of one book closely related yet infinitely diversified—affinities which we shall feel even if we fail to notice Koechlin's tendency to use similar elements and methods in the course of a work, and even from work to work. The three movements of the 'cello sonata, for instance, are built upon three forms of one theme. Here is the first:



It soon generates the following design :



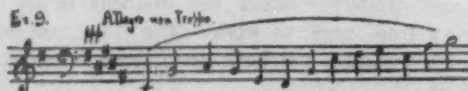
which foreshadows the theme of the finale (Ex. 9). The theme of the second movement is :



It generates the following design used in the finale :



(which compare with the quotation from *le Chant du Chevrier*, Ex. 2). The theme of the finale is :



By comparing it with the theme of the violin sonata (Ex. 1), it will be seen that all the analogies which may be pointed out are not necessarily deliberate. Notice, moreover, how very different the tenor of the music is in the two pieces.

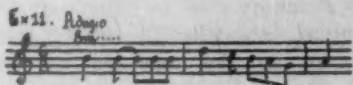
Koechlin's methods of treatment are very different from what usually obtains in "cyclic" form proper. When he uses devices whose names may smack of scholasticism—inversions, canons, and other forms of superimposition—he does it in so spontaneous a way

that some of the most definite instances his music provides might well be unconscious.

In the finale of flute sonata, this beautiful melody :



bears all the characteristic of spontaneity. Yet, noticing the notes marked by me with a cross, we may refer it—indeed, we can hardly help referring it—to the principal theme of the first movement.



Of the four big sonatas, the most definitely poetic in character and the richest in picturesque suggestion is the violin sonata. The viola sonata is more dramatic in purpose and tone. Yet between its scherzo and finale and the scherzo of the violin sonata curious resemblances are to be noticed. All three pieces suggest weird, elf-like visions, indefinable dramas and pageants of fairyland.

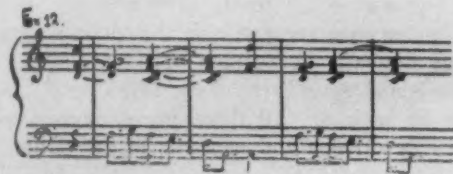
Koechlin's harmony and polyphony are no less original and characteristic of him alone than his melody. No all-embracing definition can be found for either. His methods of writing are tonal, modal, atonal and polytonal in turn. They range from the primitive simplicity of two-part writing (sonata for two flutes, andantino of 4th sonatina), in which archaic things such as sequences of fourths or fifths occur freely now and then, to "counterpoint in chords" (which may be polytonal or not), and to purely "vertical" writing, to harmonies in deep variegated layers, to notes mixed as pigments are mixed by a painter whose ultimate object is the one exact shade among many. There is no mistaking the vibrating quality of his chords, no question that he writes them because he hears them and not by virtue of some deductive process.

It is remarkable, by the way, that at the very time when it is suggested that the piano is best treated as a percussion instrument, Koechlin distinctly tends to use it for the quality of its vibrations and

the range of colours provided by its partials and resultant tones—in other words, to make more of its capacity for intensity and variety of tone-colour than any composer had ever made. His method of writing for the piano owes nothing to the technique of Chopin and Liszt. He has no use for runs, for figuration, for any of the usual effects, however effective they may be. He achieves great fulness and mellowness by means that, again, are entirely his own. Particularly noticeable are certain contrasts of pitch and duplications (Bartok is the only other composer who resorts to similar devices), spacings of intervals such as seconds, fourths and fifths; or, elsewhere, the piling up of chord upon chord in fifths, fourths or thirds, repeated at various intervals—sometimes a minor second.

In his sonatas other features of interest lie in the co-operation between the two instruments. I shall mention one only, and I had better resort to a comparison in order to make my point clear.

In Bartok's easy pieces for children (which are piano arrangements of folk-tunes), it often occurs that the setting provides a pregnant, independent comment to the tune—as in this passage from *Pro Deti* (No. 38):



Koechlin at times does exactly the reverse. In the following passage from the andante of his violin sonata:—

it is the purport of the piano part that is essential; and the function of the violin part is to bring out and heighten this purport by an independent comment. This interpretation of mine may appear far-fetched, I fear. But the utmost I can do is to leave it to the music to prove or disprove it. Another passage of similar character is to be found in the 'cello sonata, p. 5.

Koechlin's forms, emanating from the properties of his themes and dictated by the purpose of his discourse, may be long or short, simple or elaborate. Instances of form reducing itself to the free expansion of one melody have been adduced. The first movement of the viola sonata is built upon two themes sharply but briefly contrasted. Generally speaking, the first movements of his sonata are short, and in slow or moderate tempo. The finales are long and more complex in structure. That of the violin sonata is on three themes. The first, bright, crisp and simple, is given above (Ex. 8); the second, a simple, but more dreamy, little melody, occurs at first, almost unnoticeably, during the exposition of the first theme, but plays an important part further; the third is broad, smooth, religious in character. Their combinations include several superimpositions of all three. The movement ends with a loud, majestic, formal peroration.

In the finale of the 'cello sonata, practically all the material is provided by the main theme (Ex. 5), the part played by a second theme remaining secondary. The peroration is ample, affirming and reaffirming the theme, and sublimating it gradually until it loses itself amid soft harmonies. The long, fantastic finale of the viola sonata ends in similarly mysterious fashion, the character of the music becoming mystical towards the end. Two secondary themes, both elusive in rhythm and pattern, play a fairly important part in this conclusion. The working out of the finale of the flute sonata is fugal in the main, and of special interest through the way in which the ideas are varied (one instance is given above, Ex. 10 and 11).

Problems of tonal structure do not arise with regard to these sonatas. Koechlin's sense of tonality is clear and firm, but he does not scruple to overstep or ignore the prescribed limits. The first movement of his flute sonata is in E phrygian, the second in F major, the third in E major. The first of the 'cello sonata is in C major, the second in B major with a natural A, the third in E major. The first of the violin sonata is in B major, the second in A minor, the third in F sharp minor, the fourth begins in D major and ends in B major. A considerable proportion of all three sonatas is best described as omnitonal, although the omnitonicity leads to no effects so elusive as occur in Debussy's music.

This is illustrated, again, in the viola sonata, which begins by a motive in whole tones over an accompaniment suggesting the keys of C and of E flat. It ends in E flat. The scherzo begins in C minor, ends on a chord of C major introducing the andante, which is mainly atonal, but maintains in a way the same general feeling of C minor as the foregoing movements. The finale starts in F minor with a colour of C minor, but ends on a chord of F sharp minor. Other interesting schemes occur in the sonatinas. The modal character of most of the *Paysages et Marines* may be found worthy of consideration—although even there the analyst who goes by text-book rules may find a good deal that will strike him as unaccountable. My own feeling is that in matters of form, balance and diction, Koechlin's course of procedure is always justified by the event. His music is essentially live, and never deficient in inner logic. I know none whose eloquence is more direct and more convincing.

Note.—All the works mentioned in this article are published by Senart, Paris, except the *Sonatinas* and the *Paysages et Marines*, which are published by Mathot, Paris.

ON BEING TAUGHT SINGING

IN most training colleges for music there is always a course of lectures in psychology for those who are to *teach* music. But in none that I have known is there any course of psychology for those who have to *learn*. No doubt the omission is intentional and wise; the pupils are young, tractable, and will be moulded by their psychologically-trained teachers. But there is one class of students who are different from the others in many respects, namely, the singers. If they are men they are probably older than their fellow-students of the piano, if they are women they are more impatient. "Thy exquisite reasons, Sir Knight." "I have no exquisite reason, but I have reason good enough." As a rule a man will not discover his voice, after it has re-settled since the break, till he is twenty or twenty-one, by which time a violinist or pianist is nearly "out of his articles." A girl cannot help thinking that her personal charm, her youth and all that are going to help her to please the public, and that every year she delays in coming out is a year lost. So, in effect, both of them are for the same reasons anxious to hasten their training unduly, the men because they must earn, the women lest they fade. Wanted, a tactful word to prove that a singer's maturity is not 25, but 45 or 55 or 65: whatever years you lend to your training will be repaid many-fold in your subsequent career, compound interest, safe as the Bank of England.

Of all the artistic careers open to one, none is as difficult as a singer's. The whole business is so personal, the triumphs so personal, the failures so personal, the difficulties so personal. Little wonder, then, that the centre of the universe seems occasionally displaced. Of course it is largely true that singing is a highly personal form of music, the most personal form in fact, as there is little or no mechanism between the brain of the performer and the brain of the listener. So the singer begins gradually to believe that in him alone (in this article the masculine must be held throughout to include the feminine, *vide* Provisions of Sex Disqualification Act) resides the power to do what he wants, that his teachers can only give him a hint or two, which he will assimilate and dispose of according to his own temperament. They reason, in fact, somewhat on these lines: "My voice is very much part and parcel of myself, almost the essential me. I know what it is like, and that it represents me. I

can see my teachers trying to turn me out something which is *not* me. I'm going to listen to what I'm taught, and adopt just so much of it as accords with my conception of myself."

Now, unless I have very grossly misrepresented what I used to feel myself, and I think I was an "average student," I have set down the trend of thought of a singer who is not vain, but only conscious of a personality. Those four sentences above contain three misconceptions which play the devil with the job of learning. Let us take the sentences in order, and discuss them with this imaginary and argumentative young nightingale.

"My voice is the essential me." That is, perhaps, much truer than we know, both for good and for evil. It is the only one of these sentences that is true at all.

"I know what it is like." Oh no, you don't; you never will, and on the whole you may be thankful for it. Moreover, nothing will ever show you what it is really like, because it is so much part of you that you can never get outside yourself and have a look at it. The second part of the question does not therefore arise; you can't know whether it represents you or not.

"My teachers are trying to make me different to what I really am." This is the real head and front of the battle. You represent to your teacher not a *tabula rasa* on which he can write anything he will, but a subject which needs dissection and analysis, and then reconstruction and synthesis to put it all together again. If you were inanimate, simply a machine, the task would be easier. A little correction of the tongue here, the uvula there, a little more diaphragm, a little less nose, and there is a good job of work neatly turned out. But, alas, it isn't like that at all. You have to learn to *command* the muscles that move all these things. And before you can command you must *obey*. Your *will* is going to command your uvula, not your muscular strength; and you must learn to put your will at the disposal of your teacher. How many times have I heard pupils say (and said it myself): "I'm sure it *can't* be right, it doesn't feel right"? O fools and slow of heart to believe; how can you expect to command when you cannot obey? Unless you can make yourself clay in the hands of the potter, you had better go elsewhere. Find another teacher if you will, remembering always "*caelum non animus mutant*." Your unhappy teacher is trying to find out what you are, and you pride yourself on not helping him. You might as well go to a dentist and refuse to open your mouth. Yet our psychologists devote their attention to the teacher, poor suffering teacher, while the students cry out for the attentions of an Erewhonian "straightener."

Lastly, "I'm going to take just what I like of this teaching and leave the rest." But you know, it isn't like a seven-course dinner, where you can leave out the fish, and have two goes of pudding. You can't pick the vitamins A out of the soup and anti-scorbutic B something or other out of the fruit. You leave that to your inside and hope you've heard the last of it. The same is true of being taught: take it all inside, give it a chance to digest, and watch for the result. When you have beefsteak for lunch at 1 p.m. you don't feel noticeably the better for it at 2 p.m.—probably the reverse. If you try to run a mile at 1.30, on top of your beefsteak, you will probably cough it up again, but no longer recognisable as beefsteak. So, in being taught, you have a lesson on a song on Monday and try and sing it on Tuesday. You simply cough up something which is unrecognisable either as music or technique. In fact—well, that's enough of this simile. It ought to appeal to you strongly.

As a rule pupils are terribly afraid of exaggeration. They cannot understand that they must sift a lot of sand to get a very little gold, or that they must lay the paint on very thick so that a little will stick in the end. Oh, no, they know better than that; they will start with just the right quantity of paint, and if you tell them that their painting is no longer visible, they will look at you with obvious astonishment and pity for your blindness.

And the worst of it is that they are not really vain, they just know somehow in themselves that they've got something remarkable in their voices which must not be crushed. The stories of singers who really are vain, would prove too painful to tell: the opening of such abysses in the human mind shakes our confidence in each other. Better let it alone.

It is more than likely that no student of singing (and in that term I include, by courtesy, all who sing) will ever read these lines. But you who do read them, I expect you know plenty of people who are studying singing. When they come and confide to you all the rubbish that is in their hearts, give them this article to read. Don't encourage them to talk nonsense by saying that when you were young, people sang without all this teaching. We know they did; our aunts used to. Training in anything, peculiarly in the arts, and above all in singing, is self-discipline. "The best for the highest."

STUART WILSON.

THE FOUR TYPES

CLASSICAL, ROMANTIC, RHYTHMIC & HELMHOLTZEAN

At the recent Musical Conference, held in Liverpool, the most helpful remark upon musical criticism was made by a woman. She said that the great thing was, for people who felt strongly on any musical matter, to write candidly about it and fearlessly, caring for their own good fame neither as *littérateurs* nor philosophers. In the course of time these heterogeneous opinions would find their own level, and upon this level a more rational criticism of music might be founded.

It is in the spirit suggested above, that the following remarks are offered. I make my points rudely and without ceremony and entirely without modesty, thus marking more clearly, I hope, a position from which it should be easy to drive me should I be in the wrong. In respect to the headings Classical, Romantic, Rhythmic and Helmholtzean, I conceive these to cover the whole field of Music as known to-day.

What is Classical music? That is a simple matter. Classical music is any music which relies for its effects on oft-tried, reliable means of evoking emotions to which the average human mind responds readily in most of its moods, and responds, too, without experiencing any depressing reactions. It stands to Romantic music much as crystallised fruit does to fresh fruit from off the trees. It is more durable, less subtle in its joys. It must not be too ordinary, for "beauty hath ever something strange in its proportions"; it must have been conceived by the poet and philosopher in the composer, and censored by the moralist in the man. It must not unbalance the useful citizen, by showing him the face of Beauty unveiled. It is a device for economising æsthetic emotions, making the most of them, consistently with not experiencing depressing reactions of feeling. A proud man would evolve the idea for himself; on the other hand, a state seeking useful citizens would encourage that same idea, i.e., would class, or call classical, only the music which refreshes, without unbalancing the motor energies of life (i.e., the will-power, ethical activities) of the subject. It stands to Romantic music as, in logic, deductive logic stands to inductive logic, that is to say, in a relationship which is clear, yet highly complicated. It is the English who

most love the classics, the Germans who most admire them! With the Germans it is hero-worship, with us, just love of the sane moderation (as we should call it) of the music. We are prompted to this love of moderation by pride, will-power (restraint) and managing wisdom, the three characteristics which have made Englishmen what they are in the world—outstanding models of authority, hypocrisy and, on the whole of kindness, too.

Romantic music is that in which the emotions are only managed with a view to æsthetic feeling, and entirely regardless of ethic consequences—regardless of depressing reaction even upon æsthetic feelings—the emotions sought and found are volatile, and although briefly transient, at times, are none the less noble, or perhaps even on that account of the highest degree of fine frenzy. Romanticists ere long are led to the psychology of æsthetics in the hope of greater mastery and fuller discovery. And precisely here come the Helmholtzeans, the ultra-modernists whose “vanity is so great they are gone off to milk the bull.”

Jean Huré and Debussy, who started the Helmholtzean *débâcle*, very nearly exhausted Helmholtzean possibilities and had, moreover, a different object. Primarily these composers sought to reduce æsthetics to its lowest terms in music, a mere passing from one æsthetic sensation (not perception) to another whilst evoking a minimum of emotional and intellectual reaction. Debussy especially gives us music as a cat or a bird conceives music, suppressing all the sub-connective elements which the possession of rationality has built up in mankind. Helmholtz and his upper partials only entered into Debussy's calculations because the use of a whole-tone scale reduces the frequency of full reinforcing upper partials (which might stir up sub-connective emotional elements), rendering the music vague, languorous and strifeless.

But other composers, following, have been led off on quite a different track down a blind-alley, I believe; time will show. Some have even pretended that the whole beauty of their music lay in listening to or for the upper partials called forth. This is almost like saying that the chief beauty in a fair prospect was the graceful walk of a fly on a distant Church steeple. The main objection to Helmholtzean music is that it can be written or made by accident. If you send a dog after a kitten across the keyboard of a Bechstein, you will obtain some wonderful music—very like the music of some modern writers, but you would never in that way obtain any music remotely resembling, say, the Song of the Rhine daughters. I knew a boy of 12 who insisted on composing music—he was the

son of a celebrated portrait painter. He had no idea what he had written down, and when it was played it often made first-class Helmholtzean music. He was very pleased and always surprised, never having dreamt "it would sound like that."

This is where the Helmholtzean composer "has" the critic. His music may be superb, but what of the composer? We have no means of ascertaining whether he deserves any more credit for it than the dog and kitten or than the son of the painter. There is just one indication, however, that these composers are not very susceptible to mere beauty of tone at least, that is their abuse of that instrument of lovely tonality, the violin. Nearly every violin has a "wolf," a bad note, somewhere; but in playing super-modern music the violin seems all *wolves*. The defence of ultra-discordant music when attempted is not very satisfactory, one of the principal arguments being suspiciously like what logicians call an improperly converted A proposition: *e.g.*, "All good music was, at first, found hideous," from which you are expected, I suppose, to infer that "All music at first found hideous is good music," or, in a more concrete form, "All potatoes are vegetables, therefore all vegetables are potatoes."

Of course, all modernists do not rely exclusively on this little squib. There is the more formidable cracker. "Rhythm, colour and structure" matter more than pitch and timbre. There is talk of sound waves in air being submultiples of colour waves in ether, hence (it is said) corresponding with colours. Then I suppose if the notes C and D stand for red and green we have complementary colours and accordingly perfect consonance. This is a highbrow superstition; it reminds us of the idea that Heaven must be circular because the circle is a perfect figure. It is, to borrow a phrase from Mr. Whitehead (the mathematician), the "intelligent application of unsuitable ideas."

If it be urged that rhythm is "King" and tonality "Beggar," it is very difficult to know what to answer. Perhaps one may be allowed to ask why such an open fact (if fact it be) has remained so long hidden from mankind. Further, one may perhaps be allowed to wonder why the rhythm in many modern pieces is so feeble in its stimulus. I could understand the negro musicians making this claim for rhythm, or the Austrian dance composers doing so; but it comes strangely from the modernists. It is as though I were to walk into a sweet-shop and ask for a bar of chocolate cream, and the shopman to hand me a stick of mint rock with the admonition, "Chocolate, sir, pouf, never eat chocolate! Here you are, liquorice is the best sweet on the market, take this mint rock. It is liquorice you want,

sir, I assure you." Marinetti, however, even more anxious for Nietzsche's beloved Chaos, has it that sound (in contradistinction to music) is supreme. Thus the New York Broadway at noon is the finest orchestra in the world. With his *tonneurs*, *glou-glouteurs* and *claqueurs* he essayed to put the matter beyond the world's power to doubt. Marinetti's music is the *reductio ad absurdum* of indifference to melody and harmony. It is da-daism in music; they, the da-daists, jerk a rusty nail through a skein of wool and say, Behold, energy is hereby typified! So far so good, but they do not leave the matter there; they say, "and it is beautiful," and found a system of æsthetics thereon. To call such things beautiful is, of course, an abuse of language—it is to confound conceptualism with æsthetics. All this apart from the fact that some other da-daist will brush aside the energy conception and say the wool and nail plainly represent the soul of a taxi-cab. In the main most modern music is a reaction against the instability of Romantic music, that is to say the instability of our finest æsthetic consciousness, which, being pure gold, will not wear. But modernists exceed the speed limit, as a great chemist recently remarked of theorists in modern chemistry; moreover, they ingeniously apply unsuitable and irrelevant ideas. They are like Lord Bacon's "hare out of its course"—further from home than the tortoises. Briefly modernists, like M. Varèse with his "Hyperprism" (modified Marinetti), are engaged in child-like experiments, and though child-like experiments are good science they are very bad art.

H. P. MORGAN-BROWNE.

FATHER'S BASS VIOL

" Yes, sir—us finds it pleasant livin' here by the sea—only quiet in the winter. There isn't many comes here; only in the summer a wayzgoose* passes now and again.

" Naw, there idden many that stops here. Us has lodgers in and out in the summer time, but us doan't du much tu it. There was tu young ladies come this year—and I zim they won't forget the place in a hurry. Us did have a proper pen-and-ink old fnas over one of they maidens, sure enough. I'll tell 'ee. It was their custom, sir, for to go every day down by the watter, in the watter so often as not—a gatherin' sea-weed and star fishes and all sorts—collecting of them they called it, and this want day the wan maid her went to town in the fore noon, so t'other wan was forced to go out by herself—and her told us her ordained to pass all her day down along by the watter—so father he tell'd her to mind and not vall in nowhere, and us did not take no more notice about her—till it comes to be tea-time and her wadn't back, and us had our tea, and no one didn't come—and father says :

" Her's late sure—'tis up six o'clock. Where can her be tu? I zim,' he says, ' her's valled down over one of they old rocks and hurted herself—I be going down along and lookee for her—I be proper vexed over this here, and so I tell 'ee—'tis a spring tide. They maidens did ought to have more sense and not be up to these here old May games.'

" So us went on down by the watter—and 'twadn't a great while before us found her. Her was safe enough, poor toad, but us couldn't get to her, nor her couldn't get to we.

" Her was on tap of a rock. The watter had a come up with that there spring tide whiles her was out t'other side of un, and now 'twas tu deep for to get back to the land.

" ' Aw,' her calls out when her sees us, ' Aw, my dear sawl, get a boat and take me off! '

" But there wadn't only wan boat in the place, and he was broke, so that wadn't no good.

" And father he hollers out to her: ' Yu'm safe enough where

* Holiday party; s silent.

† One; rhymes with " pan."

yu'm tu. There ban't no help for it, my dear, yu'm forced to bide where yu be for up vour hours till the watter goes back, and then us will take 'ee home along.*

"Us didn't hardly know what us could do. 'Twas gettin' dimpsy,* and twadn't no use a-talking to her, her could not hear what us was telling about only if us hollered out like. All to once father says he'll go and fetch his bass viol presently;† her might like a bit of music; cheer her up and pass the time like. So he goes and brings it and starts a-plearin'.

"What sort of tunes does he play?" "Aw—father doan't play tunes; he plays in the Church along of the band—tak'th what they calls the bass—mak'th a sound like a drumble drone in a fox-glove, I tells 'um. But the band mak'th a brave little bit of music when they'm all together, they du. There's some of 'em holds with flats and some of 'em holds with sharps; father doan't play neither himself, but they all takes their parts well—though there's one or two boys that blares out too much by times.

"The passon takes a interest, but he doan't du much tu‡ it. He tells them he idden no musician, but he doan't need to do that—they vinds it out for theirselves so soon as he begin'th to zing. But I was telling about thickey§ poor maid pon tap of the rock. There her was and 'twas cruel bad for her sure enough. You see, sir, every ninth wave he brok'd over her, so her was praper wet. I du assure 'ee us was glad when the watter went back and father could stride across on the stones and help her over to the shore—and us could take her on home along.

"I putt her to bed and I giv'd her some hot cider, and the next day her wadn't none the worse.

"Father he says to her: 'Better fit, you doan't go in they old places again, my dear! Twadn't very pleasant for yu I zim pon tap of the rock, but 'tis worth the trouble if it learns you to be more wiser.

"'Better to smart once, than always ache—as the saying is.'"

PRISCILLA WYATT EDOKILL.

* Dusk.

† At once.

‡ Take much part in.

§ That.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

A Dictionary of Modern Music and Musicians. Edited by A. Eaglefield-Hull. J. M. Dent. 35s. net.

Dr. Eaglefield-Hull is a man of enterprise, a pioneer, and we welcome his book as a piece of honest and useful work. It takes up the story at about 1880 and leads us step by step through the least known period of musical history, the present day. Many will be amazed to find what a musical world they live in. If those who are mentioned here as having done something for music could be assembled they would go some way towards filling the Albert Hall, and the kindest thing they could do in return for the honour would be to write to the Editor and tell him of errors and omissions that were inevitable in a first edition.

The main difficulty in such a book as this is to get the proportions right, and the Editor has had a fair measure of success. The Spanish and perhaps the Scotch and Belgian articles are a little overlong, and Mr. Bartok's decidedly too short, but there is little to complain of otherwise, and the Editor's numerous contributions are models of compactness, for instance that on Sir Henry Wood, who himself also writes with vision upon Orchestral colours and values. Mr. Murdoch's article on Pianoforte music is a piece of lively good sense; one or two sentences are not quite clear, and a thousand words in a single paragraph bespeak a breathless enthusiasm for his subject. Other interesting articles are headed Flute, Lute, Harp, Programme and India. Organ music seems to be an omission. There is an entry for the viola but none for the violin, and the references to violin music scattered over the volume might well have had a cross reference. Cross references are scarce, and in view of the limited space more bibliographical matter would have had its use. Articles signed H. L. are good, and those of H. P. still better.

Musical illustrations are practically confined to the article on Harmony, by which, as the editorial Preface is aware, the book will be to some extent judged. It is written by a committee of eight whose names command respect. They tell us that the whole of its General Principles (their capitals) are endorsed by them. This statement may refer to the last paragraph (so headed) which defines these as "rhythm, shape and construction." It hardly takes a distinguished committee to tell us this; there must surely be something more to discriminate Europe from Borneo or Japan. But the statement more probably refers to the body of the article, and if so, the work of collective mankind compares unfavourably with that of an individual in the pithy Historical Introduction.

Fifteen scales are there given as being "in use." Leaving aside the remarkable inclusions and omissions in this list we can only express surprise that the authors should think they have made any real distinction by saying that scale is an arrangement of notes but mode of intervals. Surely a scale is a matter of acoustical intonation

(whether the Third is a Tierce or a Ditone, etc.) and a mode is a statement not of "where the semitones come" but of the musical relationship of each note to a felt tonic.

Under Construction of Chords it is duly noted that the fundamental element is now the Fourth (not, as formerly, the Third) and "inversions" and "figured bass" are described as out of date, and for the true reasons. But are chords "built" of either Thirds or Fourths? Would not that be like saying that "The quality of mercy is not strained" is built on the relation of subject and predicate? Or again, that some chords, not otherwise analysable, can be traced to "super harmonics" (which are out of tune, and among which the Fourth does not occur)—is not that like saying that "the quality of mercy" is traceable to the action of the soft palate? Browning's "not a fourth sound, but a star" meant, not that the common chord was a homonym of other elements, arbitrary or natural, but that the infinite scintillations of harmony, then, now or hereafter, depend on the fact that the ear can accept simultaneous in lieu of successive sounds. They are on safer ground when they say, though in other words, that each chord arrives (in history) as a connotation of some other chord, and then in its turn gives rise to other connotations; but then again, they whittle this away when they endorse the dictum of some "contemporary composers" who maintain that the "newer chords of modern technique" are not accounted for by elision, on which, however, new connotations largely depend.

What is really wanted for the better understanding of modern harmony is a close study of those individual composers who are worth it; for all progress consists of experiment by the great and the small and consolidation by the great. The truly enlightening thing is what Handel did to Muffat, Mozart to Handel, Debussy to Chabrier, and it is for these that we want chapter and verse; the time has not yet arrived for Bartok and Schönberg and Stravinsky. A dictionary is, it is true, hardly the place for this, though there is a phrase or two that tends in that direction in the articles on Debussy, Vaughan Williams and perhaps Delius. What a dictionary could have done in dealing with modern harmony was to trace its roots in the past where possible, and where not, to say frankly that the perspective is still too short. This would involve no disrespect to the extreme moderns, because we feel the connected sense of chords long before we can put it into words, since music is an arrangement not of facts but of emotions, and we have to be content with that. But perhaps this is what the committee mean when they trace three distinguishing features of modern music. Of these three, "omnitonality" is low Latin for Wotan putting Brunnhilde to sleep and "polytonality" bad Greek for King Mark going a-hunting, while "atonality" is a *vox nihili* (see *Music and Letters*, Vol. IV, p. 295) which, if it does not impute nonsense to the composer, must imply honest ignorance in the critic.

Sims Reeves. By Charles Pearce. Stanley Paul. 16s. net.

To us youngsters who never heard Sims Reeves, the whole period of his life seems to be one vast Apocrypha. Whatever anybody else sings well, Reeves sang it an octave higher, or twice as loud, or alternatively very much better in every way. Comparisons are not only odious, but they are highly unfruitful in such cases. We cannot reconstruct

Reeve's voice, either in point of quality or quantity, nor can we catch again at this range the faint echoes of the applause which his great gifts won for him. So his biography depends, for its interest to us, on the picture it gives of the musical life of England between the years 1840-1880. Those years were rather dreary; oratorios (live, dead and still-born) were the food of the cultivated, ballads that of the uncultivated. "Elijah" was alive, "Jephtha" was mostly dead and "St. Peter" was still-born. The oratorio craze ended because the Old Testament had been drained of all the stories which Victorian prudery would permit to be set to music for public performance. But "In this old chair" and "The Bay of Biscay" were as near immortal as could be imagined. Even the most enthusiastic admirer of this period of Victorianism finds its music a little difficult to defend. Still we have not advanced so very far in some directions: in 1848 the *Times* remarked on the absurdity of one of the conductors of the three Choirs Festivals being unable to conduct. *Autres temps, mêmes mœurs.*

It is a melancholy reflection that for the most part the age of great executants is not the age of great music. We do not know who sang Bach's arias or played his concertos, but we could reconstruct in its entirety the first performance of *Eli*, *Naaman*, *The Prodigal Son*, or any other suitable character from the O.T.

Still history has to be written and even if the period is dull and wholly deplorable, at least one can praise the zeal and industry of the historian. He is laying up treasures for others to use; and in the future History of Music, to be written 100 years hence, the chapter on Mid-Victorian Music will owe not a little of its piquant humour to the skilful use of the material collected in the volume now under review.

Wagner et le Recul du Temps. By Jean Bartholoni. Albin Michel, Paris.

From Switzerland (though published in France) comes the latest contribution to the never ending Wagner literature in the shape of a "Wagner in the Perspective of Time," by the President of the Geneva Conservatoire. The title is alluring and suggestive, but it could hardly be expected that its implications would be entirely revealed in a short volume of 250 pages, which contains an analysis of all the dramas from *Lohengrin* to *Parsifal*, biographical data, a chapter on the translations into various foreign languages and a survey of music since Wagner. In his introduction, the author says, that even a book on *Parsifal* alone might run into several volumes, and considering the immense ground which he proposed to cover in this one, one cannot help thinking that a more extensive work would have done more justice both to the writer and to his subject.

It is astonishing, however, how much sound knowledge and excellent judgment has been crammed into these comparatively few pages. They belie the title only in so far that they contain a by no means cool, dispassionate criticism, but on the contrary a warm and whole-hearted plea for Wagner's claim to rank with the giants of history. One can hardly agree with the author that *Parsifal* is the highest pinnacle which the master has attained. Spiritually—

perhaps, but musically and dramatically, there is nothing in *Parsifal* that is not equalled in the *Ring*, *Meistersinger*, or *Tristan*.

In another edition the author would be well advised to delete the statement, rather startling on the part of so diligent a student, that Wagner has never written a symphony nor *lieder*! Another doubt arises as to the public for whom the book is written. The readers are constantly referred to the orchestral scores and it would seem that those who possess and are therefore presumably able to read and understand them are hardly in need of analyses which for them at least are not extensive enough; whereas, although the book is not so highly technical as Mr. Bartoloni says it is, the ordinary amateur will derive little benefit from *obiter dicta* on scores he is not in the habit of deciphering. Again, the absence of examples in musical notation is a handicap which is not by any means obviated by the mere enunciation of the notes; what is one to think, for example, of "le thème du Feu (ici en fa majeur do, ré, do, ré, do, fa mi, ré do)?"

But all in all Mr. Bartholini has produced a readable, instructive and comprehensive exposition of his hero's aims and works. One of the best chapters is that which surveys briefly and with admirable impartiality the reaction against Wagner's theories and practice culminating in that glorious but solitary master work, Debussy's *Pelléas*, and the present day efforts to broaden the technique of musical expression.

L. DUNTON GREEN.

My Musical Life. By Rimsky-Korsakoff. Translated by J. A. Joffe and edited by Carl van de Vechten. Martin Secker. 25s.

There is something in Russian novels at once alluring and repellent. When one reads a foreign novel, French, Italian, German—even the more remote Spanish and Scandinavian—one may approve or blame, but at least it is possible to understand the motives of the individual characters. They depend on a logic different from ours, yet perfectly intelligible. But the heroes of a Tourgeniew, a Tolstoi, a Dostoiewski, baffle us; they obey impulses which seem to belong rather to the inmates of a lunatic asylum than to the members of a civilised community. They appear to us as beings of an order by turns childlike and super-intellectual; the things they say are extraordinarily disconnected, yet of a singular intensity. The premisses from which they reason are as strange as their reasoning. Everywhere we are confronted with psychological problems which remain unsolved. It is into this world of antinomy and self-contradiction that the autobiography of Rimsky-Korsakoff introduces us. Had it been written by a Dostoiewski it would have been not only an inestimable source of information about the Great Five (Cui, Balakireff, Borodine, Moussorgski and Rimsky himself), but a fascinating study of artistic life in Russia from the 'sixties to the late 'nineties. But Rimsky is not a Dostoiewski. The "Chronicle of my life" bristles with repetitions and *longueurs*; even its chronology pursues a zigzag course. Its style is unpretentious to the point of baldness, its contents a series of facts seriously, almost dryly, related, relieved at rare intervals by artless anecdotes. But these defects provide their own remedy. Whatever the literary merits of the work, it justifies undoubtedly the claims which its author puts forward in his concluding

sentence: "It (the Chronicle of my life) is without order, is unequally detailed throughout, it is written in wretched style, often even extremely dry; but in compensation it contains nothing but the truth." Sincerity is the hall-mark of this Russian musician, as it is the distinctive quality of his greater brethren in literature. If he admires himself, no less than others, ingenuously, he is unsparing in his blame of others no more than of himself. The question has often been asked how, given natural ability and talent, a composer would fare without the much abused and tiresome discipline of theoretical instruction. The answer is Rimsky, Borodine, Moussorgski, to a certain extent even Balakireff. The story of the hero-worship of the former (who were quite innocent of the rules of harmony, counterpoint, composition and orchestration) for the latter (who it would seem knew very little more and derived such knowledge as he had from purely empirical observation and research) is delightful in its naivety. And yet these three set to work and wrote symphonies, overtures and songs which, amended and corrected here and there by the more experienced Balakireff—and sometimes by Rimsky Korsakoff, just a little ahead of Borodine and Moussorgski on the path of practical experience—were performed and applauded seriously, though for the most part disparagingly discussed in the Press. Nay, after Rimsky had abandoned his naval career, we find him suddenly promoted to a professorship of musical theory at the Free School of Music, where he at first learnt more from his pupils than he taught them, then set seriously to work on what he found at 35 years to be a regrettable lacuna in his musical education. In correcting one of his earlier symphonies he became aware that without more perfect knowledge it was impossible to balance and develop its parts satisfactorily, the result was an ardent zeal for counterpoint and fugue, an increasing love for "learned writing," and a diminishing veneration for his former idol Balakireff. But at the same time he in his turn became an object of suspicion for his former associates in inexperience, Borodine and Moussorgski. One understands after such a conversion the zeal Rimsky displayed in correcting Moussorgski's works after the latter's death. He was not ignorant of the attacks this brought on him, and he defends himself by saying simply that he did unto the work of his deceased friend what he did with equal severity unto his own earlier composition, and that the originals were in existence to justify his corrections, additions, re-orchestrations, transpositions. To the extent and importance of the "editing," the "Chronicle of my life" bears astonishing testimony; as astonishing as the extent to which these young composers both helped each other and helped themselves to each other's, and even other people's, ideas! It would be rash to attribute the orchestral or harmonic texture of many of the works produced by the Five to any particular member of the Circle, so much, these pages tell us, has been added by the hand of one of the others!

It is not only on the Five that these memoirs shed an interesting and often from its very crudeness, unconsciously merciless light; they necessarily draw within their orbit all the principal *dramatis personæ* of Russian Music. The curious Lyadoff, whose wife even his best friends never saw; Glazounov, to whose versatile genius Rimsky never tires of paying a glowing tribute; Tchaikovski, whom one is surprised to find he admires only a shade less; Belaieff, that extraordinary

business man whose riches served the cause of Russian Music even after his death by endowing the Leipzig house with funds which for ever secured publishers, concerts and prizes to Russian music.

Glimpses are caught of—where did I hear this air?—insufficient opera rehearsals, orchestras indifferent to their task unless a Muck came or a Nikisch to electrify their weariness, of half-empty concert-halls and free ticket profiteers. Yes, there is decidedly more in this book than its unpromising style portends.

Mr. Van der Vechten has provided a useful introduction and notes. Mr. J. A. Joffe has done his work well, although certain Americanisms sound odd to English ears—"Having *stricken* himself from the roster of promising composers" and "intermission" (for "interval"); and once at least there occurs a curious lapse on the part of a musical translator unless indeed the author himself is to blame. What are we to think of a canticle of several *bars* in eight and ten part counterpoint? But these are slight defects, hardly more important than the somewhat irritating, though correct, transliterations of well-known names such as Pyetyerhof, Alyexander, Byelyayeff, and they are entirely outweighed by the advantage of fluency and evident musical knowledge.

Arthur Nikisch. By F. Pfohl, H. Chevalley and others. (Publisher and price not given.)

Instead of Russian haphazardness we are here confronted with German thoroughness, instead of painful groping in the byways of musical intuition, with the rigorous discipline of musical art. From his early youth Nikisch felt instinctively that he was to be neither a composer nor a violinist nor yet a pianist, although he showed considerable aptitude for all these pursuits, but a conductor. From the very beginning his energies tended towards that goal. His keen ear and unailing memory he applied consciously to penetrating the methods of conductors whom it was his privilege to hear: Wagner, of course, who—it is too often forgotten—almost revolutionised the rendering of certain works (Beethoven's symphonies for example); but also Verdi, who conducted *Aida* in Vienna and whose interpretation in all its details remained indelibly fixed in Nikisch's memory. No wonder that with a nature so predestined Nikisch excited enthusiasm from the very moment he made his debut with the modest operetta *Jeanne, Jeannette and Jeanneton*, and that ever since he marched from triumph to triumph. It is this career, surprising in its uninterrupted course of success, that the various contributors to these pages illuminate, each from his own point of view, not without repetition, unavoidable perhaps but sometimes wearisome. Professor Pfohl's contribution abounds in minute biographical data and in those dithyrambics which German writers have always deemed it their duty to shower upon the object of their consideration. The choice of expletives is astonishing in its endless variety, and after emptying the cup of perfection to the dregs one is relieved to come across a touch of human foible in the far more instructive essay of Professor H. Zollner, who timidly admits that "of course Nikisch did pose sometimes, especially in his younger years." Would not the great conductor's memory have been better honoured by less oratory, less anecdotes even (although some of them are amusing), and by a more detailed appreciation of and commentary on his interpretation of Beethoven,

Brahms, Wagner and Bruckner (whom Nikisch held in particular esteem)? There are a few cursory remarks here and there in these various articles, but even in Chevalley's "Nikisch as conductor" one fails to find a connected technical analysis of Nikisch's renderings. We do not seem to get beyond admiration for his left hand, for his cult of the string instruments (string-conductor *versus* wind-conductor!), for the magnetism of his personality, and only once do we come across a technical point of some importance: his habit of lowering his stick by a fraction of a second before the actual beat, which, says Professor Zollner, produced in modern music a very soft and delicate colour, but had the disadvantage in classical music of causing irregularity and lack of precision.

It is strange to find in articles which compare or contrast all great conductors with Nikisch not a single allusion to one who, after all, holds no mean rank among German conductors—Felix Weingartner, whose "*démêlés* with Berlin" have evidently not been forgotten. On the other hand, one is glad to find Elena Gerhardt referred to with more genuine admiration than is usual from compatriots who seem to have forgotten this great artist.

L. DUNTON GREEN.

Beethoven's Conversationshefte. By Walter Nohl. Allgemeine Verlagsanstalt, Munich. First half volume, 15 M.

It is gratifying occasionally to come across publications which are clearly idealistic—acts of reverence and piety towards the memory of the great, and of interest chiefly to historians who may desire to fix minute points of biography or to study the domestic aspect of history. As Walter Nohl aptly points out in his Preface, it is perhaps in this latter field that the 187 note-books (all that remains of the 400 or so originally in the hands of Beethoven's pupil and biographer, Schindler) will prove most fruitful. It is known, of course, to all students of Beethoven's life that as his deafness progressed, conversation with the great man was carried out on paper. It stands to reason that Beethoven's answers appear in these scraps of paper only occasionally—when for example the conversation took place in a restaurant, and he feared his remarks might be overheard by other guests; for, like most deaf people, he spoke in a loud tone of voice and his remarks usually lacked kindness. In fact, his handwriting occurs most frequently in personal notes hurriedly jotted down as memoranda of domestic errands: trousers, waistcoat, coffee, ties, candles, either for himself or for the ill-starred nephew. The guardianship of this nephew was the subject of an endless lawsuit against his brother's widow, and is referred to again and again by the boy's co-tutor Petersen and his teacher Blöchliger. With one exception these personal notes are of real interest only when they concern books which Beethoven intended to purchase and which are significant for his literary tastes and preoccupations. Translations from Latin or Greek (Xenophon's *Orations and Actions of Socrates*, for example—Beethoven always tried to make up in later life for the many lacunæ in his classical education—) philosophical and literary books. Then there is an entry: "Clear introduction to the art of Arithmetic," all the more pathetic in that the papers are not lacking in painful examples of the Master's deficiencies in the "art of arithmetic." Multiplications

were undoubtedly an insuperable difficulty, for he generally wrote down a number as often as necessary and added. This weakness must have proved most annoying to Beethoven, who was by no means averse from financial operations, either necessary (as when he borrowed on shares) or speculative. In one of the conversations, much is made of the State lottery, and Beethoven is careful to note the winning numbers of the first drawing. Altogether the note-books bear witness to a financial chaos, the legacy of the Napoleonic wars—much akin to that which prevails in Europe at present.

On the whole, although during those years (1819-20) Beethoven was engaged on writing the Great Mass in D minor for the Archduke Rodolphe, musical references are comparatively scant and moderately interesting; and they are, of course, from the pen or pencil of his visitors, of many of whom it is impossible even to guess the name. Yet it is amusing to come across this anonymous criticism of Rossini: "Tancred and Othello, he has a certain amount of genius, that is undeniable, but he is a scribbler (*Sudler*) without taste"; or of Spontini (attributed by a mistake, surprising on the part of a man like Walther Nohl, to Rossini): "He has no originality and no melody. His music has a full sound, that is all. . . . The reason is (no doubt an answer to Beethoven's question: Why did Spontini leave Paris?) that his music is not at all French. Its fundamental character is nearer the German." The remark does not lack savour since Spontini—although, of course, Italian—is generally considered as a representative of the French operatic school and the immediate precursor of Meyerbeer. Another cursory remark by one of the unknown visitors: "There is a sect in England, whose members pledge themselves to eat vegetarian food only," is interesting from the fact that the entry occurs as early as December, 1819, whereas the usual date for the first vegetarian societies is 1847. Dealings with English and Scottish publishers, a reference to English pianos (probably Broadwood): Stieler (painter of a well-known Beethoven portrait): "In Moscow people do not like Viennese pianos—English pianos are preferred," will astonish those who do not know that at one time pianos of British make occupied the place of the Bechsteins' and Steinways' of to-day.

L. DUNTON GREEN.

The Mechanism of the Cochlea, a restatement of the resonance theory of hearing. By George Wilkinson and Albert A. Gray. Macmillan. 12s. 6d. net.

Since the general structure and functions of the eye have been for so long familiar to everyone, it seems extraordinary that we should still know little or nothing in this way about the ear. Helmholtz, of course, long ago told us how that most important part of the ear—the cochlea and the basilar membrane it is devised to house—may be thought to work. But so many other theories have been since proposed, and all of them are so full of difficulties and obscurities, that most students of music have preferred to leave them alone, satisfied at most with a very brief statement of that great man's ideas.

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CONTENTS.

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XIX CENTURY.

Andre Cosuroy (Paris).

A COLOSSAL EXPERIMENT IN "JUST INTONATION."

Edwin Hall Pierce (Auburn, N.Y.).

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SRIABIN.

Herbert Antcliffe (London).

EMOTION AND THE SENSE OF FORM IN MUSICAL RECEPTION.

A. Drosdov (Moscow).

DEBUSSY AS CRITIC.

John G. Palache (Orange, N.J.).

THE FALLACY OF HARMONIC DUALISM.

Otto Ortmann (Baltimore).

THE "SECRET" OF THE PIANIST'S BEAUTIFUL TOUCH.

Donald L. Ferguson (Minneapolis).

3 LA BARTOK AND THE GRAPHIC CURRENT IN WORLD MUSIC.

Lasare Saminsky (New York).

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Edgar Istel (Madrid).

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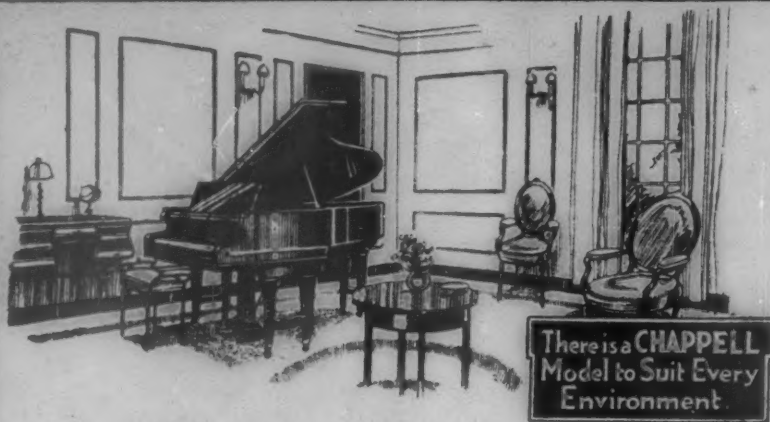
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